

Nehru Literature Series No. 5.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi

(Prime Minister of World's Largest Democracy)

by

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NEHRU FOUNDATION,

**224/4, PREM NAGAR,
GURDASPUR (Pb.)**

Published by :—

Jaswant Singh Saini,

Secretary,

NEHRU FOUNDATION,

224/4, Prem Nagar, Gurdaspur (Pb.)

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V. Jain,

Lalima Printers,

Nicholson Road,

AMBALA CANTT.

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FOREWORD

ADVANTAGES OF A WOMAN PRIME MINISTER

The Western world worships woman from many points of view. In the common parlour, an Englishman would never smoke without the permission of the ladies in the same parlour; as a matter of fact, no man in any of the Western countries ever does anything without the permission of his wife or his mother or even his daughter. If a man by some mischance happens to sneeze or cough in the presence of ladies, he atonce apologises for the unfortunate accident because in the eyes of the western people, it is a regular breach of etiquette to sneeze or cough in the presence of the fair sex probably because coughing or sneezing is an act of bad manners if it is done openly, and particularly, in the presence of ladies! The men of the western world, while sitting in a parlour or anywhere else, atonce get up from their seats at the approach of any lady; or while shopping or marketing, the men would always offer to carry any of their women's burden—a package or a basket, full of varied purchases from the shops. A really cultured and decent Englishman would never burst into laughter in the presence of a lady unless the lady laughs too. Every man in the western world offers his own seat to any known or unknown woman, whomever he may happen to find standing nearby in his presence. To be a woman therefore, in the Western world is a great privilege. But that is not so atleast in India. We Indians do not know at all how to respect our women (our ladies!). We not only ill-treat them at home but also disrespect them in every possible way outside the home. It is invariably seen that in the city buses, in the railway waiting-rooms, in the railway compartments, and even in the common parlour, no man would ever stand up or offer his seat to any approaching lady. Then again, while walking in the street or going out for shopping or marketing, it is the woman who has to carry all the purchases in her hand or on her shoulder if she has no purse enough to engage a coolie for the purpose. Everyman

in India, particularly, the so-called educated man, who wears the English dress or even the Indian *dhoti*, must show off at home or in public that he is the master while his wife or mother or sister is the slave (servant), and that is why, every woman in India occupies a very inferior position unless she is a shrew or a termagant who can lash every man with her tongue or with her broomstick !

A woman Prime Minister in India will, therefore, have a very advantageous position in all her external affairs or relations but not in her internal affairs or relations. It is, therefore, necessary for a woman Prime Minister in India to reserve the portfolio of External Affairs exclusively for herself, and to depute all the other portfolios of internal affairs to some strong male lieutenants but never to any female delegate however capable or brilliant she may otherwise be, because in a country like India, no woman would be respected unless and until man is forced to kneel down before her and made to do all the menial services, which man has been forcing woman to do in our country ever since the very dawn of creation. Indira Gandhi's appointment as the Prime Minister of India is really a very happy augury; probably it betokens man's changed attitude towards woman; probably, man has decided to surrender his imaginary superiority to woman, and at the same time, to acknowledge his inferiority before her in all spheres and activities. In this particular respect, India has advanced much further than all the European and American countries because although the Europeans and the Americans have got the greatest respect for their womanhood yet they are jealous enough not to part with their power to their women, while Indians, whose men have been jealous enough, for centuries or rather for ages, with regard to the monopoly of all kinds of rights and privileges, have very graciously agreed to hand over the responsibilities of the government of their sub-continent to the hands of a young woman. This is rather unique in the history of India as well as in the history of mankind. Our suggestion to Indira is, therefore, that she should try her best to improve the status of Indian womanhood by arranging for their better education in the schools, colleges and the universities, for their better status at home, in society and in all public places, for

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their training and appointment in all the government services, particularly, in the Foreign Service where they will undoubtedly prove to be real assets as Indira herself will prove to be so in all external affairs and relations of our country with the world abroad. These days, it is the External Affairs portfolio which has to be strengthened as far as possible because the existence, progress or prosperity of a country now-a-days depends upon her external relations with other countries, because, any man with mediocre capabilities can tackle any of the problems of internal affairs. Our genuine request to Indira is, therefore, that from now onwards, she should try to pull up the race of her sisters who have been downtrodden in India for ages. We sincerely believe that woman is the stronger sex because she is the original source of creation of the universe. Everywhere we find that the female sex always survives the longer than the male sex, and therefore, she is undoubtedly the stronger sex. The manner in which woman is advancing in the western countries is a clear proof of her superiority over man. In our country too, the very fact that we have elected a woman to the position of the Prime Minister clearly shows which way the wind is blowing. We sincerely believe that during the remaining years of the twentieth century, woman will rule over man while man will obey; woman will survive while man will decay; woman will triumph while man will fail; woman will bring about harmony and peace in the world which man has lost by his stupidity and wickedness.

15th April, 1966.

T.K. Dutt.

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MRS. INDIRA GANDHI

Prime Minister Of World's Largest Democracy

CHAPTER 1

MRS. INDIRA GANDHI ELECTED PARTY LEADER

THE 19th of January, 1966, is a red letter day in the history of India, because a great woman of our country—Mrs. Indira Gandhi—was elected Leader of the Congress Party in Parliament to become the first woman Prime Minister in the World's largest Democracy. In the first leadership contest in the history of the Congress Parliamentary Party, Mrs. Gandhi polled 355 votes against 169 votes polled by Mr. Morarji Desai in a straight contest. Only two votes were invalid. With Mrs. Gandhi's election, she stepped into the throne of her most illustrious father Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru who was the first Prime Minister of our great country and who ruled for about eighteen years as the Prime Minister, which is indeed a unique event in the history of mankind. Gladstone and Churchill remained the Prime Minister of England for the longest period in human history but Nehru surpassed them in the duration of his prime ministership chiefly because Nehru was the idol of the young and the old alike. Mr. Kamraj, the Congress President said on the occasion, "The country is passing through a very difficult period. We have elected Mrs. Gandhi to take over the burden of the Prime Ministership of the country. There are many difficult problems today—difficulty on the food front; our economic condition is critical, and there is also the border problem. It is only by united and co-operative efforts that we will be able to succeed in solving all these problems. Mrs.

Gandhi is to strive hard to see that the living standard of the people improve considerably. It is a great and tremendous responsibility which she is taking over. We hope and trust that she will provide good and efficient government and administration and find solutions for the problems with which we are confronted today."

Mrs. Gandhi expressed her gratefulness to all members whether they had voted for her or not and said, "I pledge myself to the service of the party and the nation." She said that she would try her best to make the country strong and to strive for peace. She reminded the cheering members of the Parliament that India was facing great odds but she was sure that the people of this great country with their strength would face them. She asked for their sympathy, understanding and unity. She said that she had faced dangers and difficulties but they had never given way to them. The people of India might be poor and illiterate, but they had inherent strength, and that was a cause of confidence and hope. She welcomed Mr. Morarji Desai's contest and said that she was heartened by it. Mr. Desai said that the new leader's task was by no means easy. He added, "I do not refer to her personality only because the task of the Prime Minister in this country is a difficult one, especially at the present juncture when there are many difficulties facing us. It is, therefore, necessary for us to strive hard in every field in which we are working and to have complete unity among ourselves."

Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda said, "We have great pleasure and great privilege to extend to Mrs. Gandhi our heartiest congratulations. At this moment one could not help remembering our great and beloved leader Jawahar Lal Nehru—the greatest of the sons of the soil and the greatest leader of the nation. Mrs. Gandhi had a long period of training and apprenticeship under the guidance of her illustrious father which would come to fruition now. The country is passing through a difficult situation, and a great task lies ahead of the new leader. With her magnificent record of service, Mrs. Gandhi would be able to discharge her new responsibilities. With Mrs. Gandhi at the helm of the nation, it is assured that the shining ideals

cherished by Pandit Nehru will be adhered to and worked for with zeal and devotion." Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh said, "It is a proud day for women in India." She expressed the hope that under Mrs. Gandhi's stewardship India would prosper. She further said, "Mrs. Gandhi has very difficult tasks before her. I am confident, she will get the fullest co-operation of all in tackling them."

WORLD PRESS COMMENTS ON MRS. GANDHI'S ELECTION

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's election as the Prime Minister of India was widely acclaimed in the American press. Most of the journals in their editorial comments expressed their sympathy for the problems which faced Mrs. Gandhi, and noted that while she had the 'magic sura' of Nehru's name and association, she was also a political leader in her own right and would be no body's tool. Her election was viewed as asserting the trends towards unity and peace in India. *The Washington Post* suggested that the United States should make a positive gesture of support to India so that it would wipe away the ill-feelings left by the (India-Pakistan) war period. *The New York Times*, under the caption, "Mrs. Prime Minister" said in an editorial that Mrs. Gandhi was going to be an interesting and unusual "Prime Minister.". It said that Mrs. Gandhi was a person with her own ideas which would not necessarily coincide with those of her father or Mr. Shastri. *The New York Herald Tribune* said, Mrs. Gandhi was elected "not because of but in spite of the fact that she is a woman", and added, "Her position in the past has always been at the left of her late father and has been identified with that of an extreme leftist V. K. Krishna Menon." The journal hoped, Mrs. Gandhi would abandon this position and "preserve a close relationship with India's major friends and supporters in the West." Both the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* agreed that Mrs. Gandhi was taking office at a terribly difficult time when India was facing an economic crisis, famine in some parts of the country, and a difficult international position "between a still unsatisfied Pakistan and an always threatening Communist China." *The Washington Star* said

that for any one, the leadership of the world's second largest nation would represent an awesome challenge, but for Mrs. Gandhi it also seemed to represent the fulfilment of a life long destiny.

All Moscow papers published at their front pages in big headlines the news of Mrs. Indira Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister of India. The papers also carried Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's congratulatory message to Mrs. Gandhi. The Organ of the Soviet Defence Ministry *Krasnaya Zvezda* published Mrs. Gandhi's press conference after her election. It quoted her saying that India would fulfil obligations undertaken by Mr. Shastri in Tashkent Declaration.

The election of Mrs. Gandhi as India's new Prime Minister has been prominently featured in the British Press. The morning newspapers—serious as well as popular—carried long despatches from their India-based correspondents and pictures of the new Prime Minister. Several of them carried editorials or articles by columnists on the new Indian leader. They also published side-bar stories comparing the role in politics of British and Indian women. *The Guardian* said, "Once again Indian democracy has vindicated itself in the free and orderly choice of a national leader". The editorial added, "Ideology seems to have entered little into the present contest." Mr. John Grigg (formerly Lord Galtrincham), a well known British political commentator in his back-page column in the *Guardian* said, "Probably no woman in history has assumed a heavier burden of responsibility, and certainly, no country of India's importance has ever before entrusted so much power to a woman under democratic conditions. She has a sharp mind, a strong will, and a dedicated spirit. If she makes a success of the job, she will deal that may be a knock-out blow to lingering notions of male superiority." *The Daily Telegraph* spoke of the broad assets Mrs. Gandhi brings to the premiership. It said, "Her most important immediate advantage is the fact of being Nehru's daughter. The editorial said, "At home, the reflected lustre of that name should help to establish her still untired authority and also to contain the diverse tendencies within the Indian Union," whilst in the conduct of foreign

relations, "she will benefit from the cosmopolitan outlook inculcated by her father and from her experience as his diplomatic hostess." *The Times* spoke of her strength and weaknesses, "the values of liberalism and secularism, the concern for the poor and impatience with oppression in the name of tradition to which Nehru was committed was hers from earliest consciousness."

UAR official quarters and press have acclaimed the election of Mrs. Gandhi. Almost all papers splashed the news of her election as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and in editorials, welcoming her choice, wished her well in tackling the tricky problems" facing her both at home and abroad. At the present period of delicate relations with Pakistan, Indira, who like her father is not a religious fanatic, can win the confidence of tens of millions of Muslims both in India and Pakistan. This is what Cairo's *The Egyptian Gazette* writes in its editorial about Mrs. Gandhi. The Yugoslav press hailed the election of Mrs. Gandhi as 'wise' and the most suitable choice. The leading Belgrade dailies *Borba* and *Politika* carried extensive reports on her election and a good number of photographs of Mrs. Gandhi on their front pages. *Borba* in an editorial said, the Congress had elected as India's Prime Minister, a dignified, wise, progressive, and very talented Indian woman. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, it said, was the most suitable choice in this insecure time for India and the world, to continue the brave and wise policy of her father in the international sphere and the path of socialist development in the country". *Zycie Warszawy* (*Warsaw Life*), Polish government-owned newspaper said, Mrs. Gandhi's election was a triumph of compromise policy within the Congress Party. She belongs to the left wing of the party, but representatives of other sections of the Party believe, she would eventually lead a collegial party leadership. In Tokyo, the news of Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister-elect was welcomed by all sections of the people.

WORLD'S GOOD WISHES TO MRS. INDIRA GANDHI

Pope Paul the Sixth telegraphed his best wishes to Mrs. Gandhi. In his message the Pope recalled the extremely warm reception accorded to him during his visit to Bombay at the end of 1964. The Pontiff asked Heaven's blessings for Mrs. Gandhi, her family, and the beloved Indian people. The Director General of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Mr. Rene Mahen, sent his warmest congratulations to Mrs. Gandhi. All members of the UNESCO Secretariat joined in these congratulations. By electing a woman Prime Minister, India had stepped ahead of many advanced countries where the progress in emancipation of women had been greater,—that is what Mr. C.V. Narasimhan, Chief de Cabinet to the U. N. Secretary-General, said. Addressing a meeting under the auspices of the Women Graduates' Union, he said that election of Mrs. Gandhi was a historic occasion. We can be proud of this, he said.

President Kenyatta, in a cable to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, has said that the people of Kenya are looking forward to her contribution to friendly relations between Kenya and India and peace and prosperity among all nations. Conveying the sincerest congratulations of the people and the government of Kenya and his own on her election as Prime Minister-designate, President Kenyatta said, "Your victory in the election is the manifestation of the love and high esteem with which India's people view you and value your untiring efforts towards stability, peace and understanding among all peoples." Uganda's Premier Sir Milton Obote, has sent a message of congratulation to Mrs. Gandhi praising her election as a sign of confidence and trust which the Indian people have placed in her leadership. He added, "On behalf of my countrymen and the people of Uganda, I like to associate myself with the people of India in wishing you every success in carrying out the heavy responsibilities placed on your shoulders."

The Australian Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, in a message to Mrs. Gandhi, offered his warmest congratulations on her election as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party.

Sir Menzies said, "I feel sure that you will carry out your duties in the spirit of your illustrious father and your distinguished predecessor. We look forward working closely with you in matters affecting both our two countries and the Commonwealth." Polish Prime Minister Jozef Cryankiswicz has also sent a message of congratulations to Mrs. Gandhi. Dr. Ludwig Erhard, West German Chancellor, wished Mrs. Gandhi would lead India towards social and economic development, as initiated by her father who remained unforgotten in Germany. The British Guiana Prime Minister, Mr. Forbes Burnham, in a message of congratulations to Mrs. Gandhi said, "Please accept congratulations on behalf of the government and people of Guiana and good wishes for a successful term of office." Jamaica's acting Prime Minister Donald Sangoter cabled to Mrs. Gandhi, "We always admired your courage and ability as you assisted your famous father in movement towards independence. We would like to wish you a most successful term." UAR Premier Zakaria Mohieddin in his message to Mrs. Gandhi sent his good wishes to her and expressed the hope that UAR-Indian relations would be further consolidated. Mr. Gyula Kallai, Prime Minister of Hungary in a congratulatory message to Mrs. Gandhi has said, "It is my wish that as successor to the political heritage of your father of immortal memory, you may achieve great results through your activity as head of Government in promoting the prosperity of your country and people, in consolidating the peace and security of the peoples of the world."

CHAPTER II

LIFE-SKETCH OF MRS. GANDHI

A short life-sketch appeared in the columns of the National Herald, Lucknow which is quoted below :

“Mrs. Indira Gandhi was born on November 19, 1917, and spent her early childhood in an atmosphere of intense political activity with her parents and other members of the family constantly moving in and out of prison. Indira, Priyadarshini as she was then called, had her first education in Switzerland and later at Oxford, and Viswabharati, Santiniketan. Recollecting her happy days at Santiniketan she says, “I was greatly influenced by Tagore. With police always coming in to arrest my parents, there was insecurity at home. I felt in Tagore a peaceful atmosphere. I had always regarded poetry as something separate from life. Tagore showed that all the arts were integrated.” Indira’s active participation in politics began when she was in her early teens. She organised a children’s brigade known as ‘Vanar Sena’ to render help to the congress non-cooperators at Allahabad, and later, this organisation grew into a veritable force of 60,000. With the background of her active interest in the student movement in England and in India, she joined the Congress at the age of 21, going to prison for thirteen months for participating in the freedom struggle. She worked hard during the 1937 elections and made contacts with the masses especially with women in the villages. She and her husband, the late Mr. Feroze Gandhi were again imprisoned soon after their marriage in 1942. Immediately after the Partition in 1947, she worked under the direction of Mahatma Gandhi in the riot-affected areas of Delhi. Besides being a member of the Congress Working Committee, Mrs. Indira Gandhi is the Chairman of the Women’s department of the Congress, a member of the Central Election Board, the Central Parliamentary Board and of the Youth Advisory Board of the All-India Congress Committee. She was elected President

of the Indian National Congress at the Nagpur session held in February, 1959. Earlier when the Congress had decided to have an elective element in its Working Committee, Indira secured the highest number of votes in her election to that body. Her tenure as Congress President was marked by a number of political successes for the Party. Social Service has been a passion with Indira from an early age. During the periods when her schooling was interrupted owing to every one in her family being in jail, she went to school in Poona and worked in the slum areas there, among untouchables to promote Gandhiji's campaign of social uplift. In spite of her preoccupations as hostess at Prime Minister's House, she devoted a great deal of her time to the welfare of children. She is the President of the *Bal Sahayok* (which she founded), the Training Centre for Vagrant Boy's of the Kamla Nehru Vidyalaya—a Training Centre for rural women and children in Allahabad district ; and of the Bal Bhawan Recreation Centres, which are scattered in different parts of the country. She is also President of the Indian Council for Child Welfare and Vice-President of the International Union for Child Welfare. She is actively connected with the Central Social Welfare Board and the All-India Handicrafts Board.

“Indira is a trustee of several philanthropic and cultural organisations. She is connected with the management of three premier institutions of Allahabad—the Swaraj Bhawan Trust, the Children's National Institute and the Kamla Nehru Memorial Hospital. Besides being the Chairman of the National Integration Committee, she has also been a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO. When China attacked India and the country was faced with an unprecedented emergency, Indira worked tirelessly, arranging various services for the welfare of the Jawans, visited the front-lines to see for herself the conditions in which the Jawans lived and fought. As Chairman of the Citizens Central Council, she gave an impetus to the nation's defence efforts. Indira is interested in art and education. She is a member of the Central Advisory Board of Education, and is associated with the development of various dancing and music societies in the capital. She has been largely responsible for the cultural pageant as well as the

folk adnce festival which are now annual features of the Republic Day Parade. Indira has travelled widely in Asia, Europe, America and Russia. Recently, she went on a good-will tour of a number of African countries. On a number of occasions she has accompanied her father on his official visits to different countries and came into contact with some of the highest people in various fields in those countries. Despite her multifarious duties, Indira is easily accessible and is always patient, generous and kind. She is keen bird-watcher and is interested in mountaineering. Reading, trekking, swimming and winter sports are some of her other hobbies. She joined the Central Cabinet for the first time as Minister for Information and Broadcasting on July 2, 1964."

The 1,000,000 strong readership of the Evening Standard has been given a verbal picture of Indira Gandhi by Marie Seton, author of a forthcoming book on Jawaharlal Nehru in an article under the heading. "Indira Gandhi—She dreamed of being India's Joan of Arc." On this point Marie Seton says, "In 1958 here in London looking a little shy and rueful, Indira Gandhi told me that as a child she dreamed of herself as India's Joan of Arc. But often since in the moments of crisis the ideal of Joan has come up again. By 1958, Indira Gandhi had been the youngest member of the Congress Working Committee for two years. When she mentioned Joan of Arc she had no suspicion that she was about to face a new kind of challenge—"My whole life has been one challenge after another—to be called upon to accept the presidency of the Congress." Marie Seton elsewhere in the article writes: "For ten years I have known Indira Gandhi, watched quietly a private and sensitive woman emerge as a practical person. She can turn her hand to anything. On the 'myth' that she grew up in wealth, Marie Seton comments: "Soon after her birth, the Nehru money dwindled having been spent to aid the Independence struggle. Royalties on her father's books paid for her education. Because of her family being constantly in jail, Indu, as she was called, learnt to stand on her own feet virtually as soon as she could toddle. It served her well: in 1940, she found herself stranded in Lisbon, waiting for a ship. She survived by giving English lessons. Ever since, in different

connotations, she has been improvising salvation of herself, other people, or some project." Marie Seton recalls that she was at Bhubaneswar when Nehru collapsed, and goes on to say, "Indira, except for the afternoon after his collapse, attended every session of the Congress Party Conference. She stepped into his shoes. Within less than twenty four hours she was being pressured to accept the office of Deputy Prime Minister. She refused fully aware that to accept would be tantamount to agreeing to become her father's successor. Neither aimed at." Marie Seton also writes, "I am convinced that this subtle and sensitive woman, who so often expresses the freshness and simplicity of a young girl, could only in a crisis of extreme kind be induced to accept herself as a Prime Minister. After her father's death, she took only the most modest of ministries. But I have always felt that if the crisis in India and the need for unity became grave enough, Indira Gandhi would sacrifice her private existence, because she is so profoundly Indian in spirit. Throughout India's history, it has been the women who have preserved her inherent culture. The first day I met Indira, I felt, it was a great injustice to think of her only as Mr. Nehru's daughter. She seemed an exceptionally interesting woman and a person in her own right. My opinion has not changed as I have watched her grow from year to year in the face of challenge and crisis."

Whatever Marie Seton may have to say about India's dream of Joan of Arc, our interpretation is quite different from hers (Marie Seton's). The dream of Joan of Arc is quite natural to come to every young girl who is ambitious, courageous and also adventurous, and also who wants to play out the role of a heroine in her life. Indira might have dreamt of Joan of Arc because in her heart of hearts she wished to be a heroine (of freedom) like Joan of Arc. But one should not press the dream or its symbolical significance too far. We can never think nor can we ever wish that like Joan of Arc, Indira too will be misunderstood (by whom?) as a heretic, and on that account, will be burnt on the stakes! No, surely not. Little children dream of so natural and unnatural dreams which come true. We adults also dream of so many things but none of them comes out true. That is why, every body, whenever

one goes to compare a thing with a dream, says that it is as airy as nothing. So far Indira is concerned, we surely wish her to be a great heroine of our country and to lead all the womanhood of India to some loftiest ideal. We are afraid, Marie Seton's pen-sketch of Indira, at least in this particular respect is not at all true. In other respects too, we do not think, Indira resembles Joan of Arc at all, because Joan was a visionary woman, suffering from hallucinations, delusions or illusions; she might have been a clairvoyant; but as far as we know Indira she is nothing of the sort; on the other hand, she is one of the most practical women, and this practical-mindedness she must have inherited from her father and not from her mother. Because Indira is a practical-minded woman, so she has agreed to be the Prime Minister of our country at this critical moment when there are so many acutest problems—food problem, Kashmir problem, Naga problem, China problem, Language problem, and even Pakistan problem. Indira is exceptionally Indian in spite of her European education, culture and personal contacts, and it is only in the sense that like most other Indian women—educated and uneducated—she is most practically-minded particularly in her acceptance of the Prime Ministership. Possibly, she wanted to represent the womanhood of India and to prove before the world at least once in the history of India that she has proved to be one of the ablest administrators of our country just as her father has proved himself to be by remaining in office for at least seventeen years, which is the longest period of premiership that any man on earth has so far enjoyed. Our Congress President Kamraj also said the other day, "Mrs. Indira Gandhi will turn out to be the best administrator of our country, and she will sincerely try to translate the aspirations of our people into policies and implement them with all the rigour of her command."

Mrs. Gandhi, in an interview, broadcast from All India Radio, answered certain questions by which also we can judge her character, her thoughts and views on India and her problems, to a much greater extent than Marie Seton can possibly judge.

Question:—Mrs. Gandhi, it has been a very exciting day

for every one. What are your first thoughts on being elected as leader of the Congress Party in Parliament ?

Answer:—I am overwhelmed by the honour that I have received, and also I feel very humble at this moment, thinking of the vast country, the poverty and difficulties of our people and the tremendous problems which confront us.

Question:—There are so many factors which must have influenced your intellectual and political approach and outlook. Your father, Jawahar Lal Nehru, has been very much in every body's thoughts, and I expect, in yours in the last few days. What do you think you have learnt most from him ?

Answer:—It is difficult to separate any one item. When one lives with the person, the influences are subtle and I suppose not so obvious. I have, I think, inherited from him a great love of the Indian people.

Question:—Your educational background must also have contributed to what you are today. What did you gain most from your Schooling in Switzerland and at Santiniketan, and from your years in Oxford ?

Answer:—I think that formal education plays less part in forming a personality than the influences of people and reactions to events, and so on. But going abroad gives one the chance to meet different types of people, and therefore, to broaden one's horizon and one's vision. I was specially privileged that my father was friendly and known and loved by such a wide variety of people—scientists, artists, literary people in many countries abroad, and because of him I was able to meet them and know them also.

Question:—You are one of the youngest Prime Ministers in the world today. What do you feel about Indian youth today, and in what way can they help you in your work for India ?

Answer:—Well, obviously, the future belongs to youth, and therefore, they have to take a far greater part in understanding and solving the problems which face our country. Youth is a matter of age but is also a question of mentality, and our people do not always have a youthful mentality. I would like

our young people to try and bring in the spirit of youth, that is, facing problems with courage, a sense of adventure, and also in having a scientific and national outlook.

Question:—You spoke recently of upholding the ideals which we all cherish. What are those ideals ?

Answer:—This is a very wide question. We have in our country equal rights to every citizen. We had the policy of our secularism which does not mean that we are against religion but rather that we give equal respect to all religions. For the same reason, we adopted the democratic method of Government. Now, in a country, where there is such great poverty, you can not really have freedom of expression or freedom of equality which are essentials to democracy unless the under-privileged and the poorer people are helped to raise their standards of living and to meet their basic necessities ; that is why, we have chosen Socialism as a means of achieving, of increasing production, and of having better distribution.

Question:—Now, moving to a completely different sphere, will you continue to keep up your interest in the arts with which you were so actively associated as Minister for Information and Broadcasting ?

Answer. I certainly hope so. Life would be very dull without that.

Question:—And from that to relaxation. You know the life of a Prime Minister is very strenuous one. And it has been felt that the first two Prime Ministers of India drove themselves too hard at the cost of their health, if not their life. Have you thought of putting aside some time for rest ? Will you continue to arrange flowers in your house and have time for hobbies such as bird-watching ?

Answer:—I can only try. These things are not always in one's control.

Question:—And finally, I notice, it is mostly Western correspondents who have talked about your being a woman Prime Minister. To what do you attribute the naturalness with which women can attain the highest positions in India and the confidence with which they occupy them ?

Answer:—I think, this goes a long way back to our history, because although women were oppressed at certain stages, all through our history, you will find names of women who shine like stars in different spheres of activity, whether it is mathematics, religion or writing. We know about women who shine like stars in the battle, and so on. And I think, the general public has come to expect this part of life. And when women got greater opportunities through education and also because of their participation in the independence struggle, I think, it was taken as a natural fact that they were part of the population and not a separate species.

From the above questions and answers we can conclude that poverty of India has gone very deep into the very heart of Mrs. Gandhi. But how can she remove India's poverty? Poverty is the inevitable inheritance of modern developments of science and industries, or rather of Capitalism which has always the tendency to exploit labour. How can Mrs. Gandhi save India from Capitalism when she wants to develop India in all respects in order to raise the standard of living which means again the development of science and industries that has led in the modern world to so much of disparity between the various ranks of life in the material world. Does Mrs. Gandhi propose to go back to the ideal of Mahatma Gandhi who himself used to put on the loin cloth only and who lived on vegetables and goat's milk only for most part of his life? Or does Mrs. Gandhi think of nationalising all the industrial and commercial concerns so that there will be no private individual ownership of wealth or of any kind of material property? Then again, does Mrs. Gandhi propose like Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, the Union Home Minister, to root out corruption from our country altogether? If so, let her along with the Home Minister, first of all, send to the guillotine all the black-marketeers, the profiteers, the adulterers of food and medicine, and every one of those who bribe the government officials in order to earn money through the backdoor. But can they do that? If not, it is no good indulging in the speculation of the nightmare of poverty.

CHAPTER III

SPECULATIONS ON MRS. INDIRA GANDHI AND HER RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

The editorial of the *National Herald*, Lucknow, says :—

“Indira Gandhi has qualities which, if used well, constitute elements of greatness, strength of character, nobility of heart, clarity of outlook, correct political instincts and a wide and varied knowledge of affairs and men. There are also the hereditary advantages, which make her a person without a streak of meanness in her make-up, with great consideration for fellow human beings, and with not only convictions but with the courage to express them, especially in times of confusion. The Prime Ministership, which follows her enthusiastic election as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, is not only an honour and a burden but a challenge to her many qualities and to her capacity to preserve and enrich the heritage of Jawaharlal Nehru. In whatever she does, she will not be wanting in tenacity or courage; she can never be bullied or blackmailed. She is no wobbler. She has not much experience in administration but she has an open mind, a generous temper, and the capacity to attract cooperation, and to take work. With all her modesty, there are few persons in the country who have her flair for political leadership. She does not know what intrigue is. With her life-long association with the people, she is among the few in public life who have a mass appeal, and she will always be close to the masses. The country's interests will be safe in her hands. The election of Indira Gandhi as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party has been accompanied by an unnecessary controversy which has neither enriched political science nor added to the values of public life. Mr. Morarji Desai had every right to stand for

election, if he wanted, and he has many qualities which make a good Prime Minister, though unfortunately in his case, the quality of attracting people and securing their cooperation is not one of them. His decision to contest the election even after Indira Gandhi's name was widely suggested could not be criticized, and it is rather to his credit that he stuck to his decision. But the issues raised were sanctimonious and misleading, while the issues raised by some opposition members were not only irrelevant but constituted interference in the Congress Party's affairs. The leadership of the Congress Parliamentary Party, which now means Prime Ministership, cannot be compared to the position of the leader of the majority party in Britain. The Congress is not merely a parliamentary party. No Prime Minister can carry on as merely the leader of the party in Parliament. As most members of Parliament know, their position depends on the party organisation, on the bases in the States and on their relations with leaders in the States. The party in Parliament is a national party but with roots in the States. If Chief Ministers indicated to the Congress President that they wished, Indira Gandhi should be requested to stand as a candidate, it was not an extraordinary act of extra territorial intervention. Their future as well as the future of members of Parliament depended much on who would lead them in the next general elections.

“Mr. Desai with his many admirable qualities, made a crucial mistake in making it clear from the beginning that he wanted the Prime Ministership, whatever any one else thought. He was justified in thinking that he was entitled to be Prime Minister, but he should have taken into account at some time or other that, according to most Congressmen, including Chief Ministers, he would not make a good leader. By taking an inflexible stand, he made unanimity impossible. And if he was to be a candidate in any case, he had to be beaten. Some one or other had the right to propose the candidate with the greatest chance of beating him. The Chief Ministers were not electing a Prime Minister nor thrusting one; they merely proposed that some one should be requested to stand. Mr. Desai, unfortunately, tried to be as shrewd as he wanted to be honest. If Chief Ministers expressed one

view, he seemed to think that there were dissidents in most States who could be relied upon to rally round him. This is what has happened. The votes he has gained are not votes cast against the Chief Ministers who sponsored Indira Gandhi. This voting strength too has not been impressive. Indira Gandhi's majority being more than double the votes Mr. Desai managed. While being again unfortunate and proving his lonely eminence, Mr. Desai is not likely to give up his claim to political character and he must be taken to mean what he has said in assuring Indira Gandhi of his cooperation. It is unfortunate that he should have been prevented from achieving the highest political office in the land, but he has only himself to blame for the amount of alienation he has achieved from so many sections of Congressmen. It is no use blaming Mr. Kamraj or any one else, whose only fault was that they did not want Mr. Desai as Prime Minister. Indira Gandhi has many complex and difficult tasks ahead and needs the cooperation of all Congressmen, not only of members of Parliament. It is essentially a Congress election though others have thought it fit to talk jealously of dynasties. A dynasty means a succession of hereditary rulers. The Prime Ministership of India is not hereditary in any sense, and Indira Gandhi has been elected, and not elected even in succession to her father. Nobody talked of dynasties when there was a Pitt the Younger after Pitt the Elder. The talk of dynasties is only a meddlesome diversion by people who regret they have no chance of setting up dynasties themselves or by people whose lives are not models of political monogamy.

“Indira Gandhi is attracting admiration, adulation and advice even from those who would have smothered her in other ways at other times. Whether a Prime Minister is dead in Tashkent or whether a new person is chosen the next Prime Minister in New Delhi, there is always a *mela* spirit among India's millions; but Indira Gandhi has grown enough in political struggle to know that flattery does not mean loyalty and that sycophoney does not mean support. Even worshipful crowds can turn into unruly mobs. Ultimately, what matters is not what Indira Gandhi is by heredity or even by attainment but what she stands for and what she is able to achieve, by the

utterness of her dedication and the completeness of her self-surrender. She knows it as the child of Jawahar Lal Nehru, who watched his own arduous, bitterly opposed, struggle to establish correct and irreversible processes. While welcoming the historic opportunities which have been offered to her, Indira Gandhi is not likely to be overwhelmed by the incense offered by the long procession of Tadpoles and Tapers, even by the tallest among them. Not is she likely to be overtaken by the advice offered by people who had nothing to do with the freedom movement and did not understand its impulse and rapture, who opposed the nation-building processes which Jawahar Lal Nehru worked so hard to establish, and who, at opportune moments, become scribes and scribblers, employed to denigrate whatever Jawahar Lal Nehru stood for and whoever stood for him. The first task, after new general elections as after the swearing-in of a new Prime Minister, is cabinet-making. This should not be treated as a kind of political carpentry. The textbooks of political science, which is yet far from being a science, show that as far as cabinet-making, cabinet-working, and collective responsibility go, politics is an art with endless variations. Indira Gandhi knows the grandeur and degradation of the human spirit as few other political leaders do, and though her experience, even recent experience of office, has not made her a cynic, and she is still a humanist and an artist in the management of men, she is more of a realist than her father. Still, cabinet-making will try her patience and skill, and much will have to be left to the future, after the general elections. If even part of the dead word is dropped, it will show that a new spirit animates the administration. But Indira Gandhi should know that there are too many playboys of politics going about claiming to be young blood or fresh blood. She has to be careful that she does not draw upon bad blood in the name of infusing young blood. After all, as Dickens put it : *"Giving the Home Department to Joodle, the Exchequer to Koodle, the colonies to Loodle and the Foreign Office to Moodle, what are you going to do with Noodle ? You can't offer the Presidency of the Council. That is reserved for Poodle. You can't put him in the woods and forests. That is hardly enough for Qoodle. What follows ? That the country is shipwrecked, lost and gone to pieces because you can't provide for Noodle ?"*

“In all the advice with which Indira Gandhi is being smothered, there is much that is misleading and little that is definite. Public opinion is, like the black Moor Othello, full of noble passions but very jealous and ready to smother the fairest Desdemona. It is not public opinion that is speaking now, for even press opinion has nothing to do with public opinion. Those who now worship will want to crucify. Indira Gandhi knows the complex processes of public opinion and knows how to handle it, how to nourish it, and how to guide it. She is an idealist without illusions. While it is but right that she should make a national appeal, emphasize the national objectives, and especially represent national solidarity against external dangers, she knows that class interests are real and they will clamour for expression. The big omission in the advice that is being offered is Socialism. Nobody talks of it. But Indira Gandhi will have to talk of it, not only because she believes in it but because that is the essence of her father's heritage. Socialism, democracy and secularism go together in this country. As Jawahar Lal Nehru showed, they are all inevitable. Indira Gandhi represents continuity from that solid structure of nationhood which Jawahar Lal Nehru left behind ; she is not merely to continue an interregnum. She has to enrich her heritage. She should also be ambitious enough to try to be nearer to history than to office. There is the question of instruments, and in this too, there is no better example than Jawaharlal Nehru. His success was never smooth. At every stage, he was forced to wage crucial struggles. Even at the Congress he was at bay more than once. But he had a frank, open and generous mind and a sense of history, courage in abundance, and pride and faith and nobility. There was no end to the advice which he received, apart from the threats and challenges ; but he went straight along the path he knew was right and which he had chosen long ago. He was asked to erect around him brain trusts, and coteries of advisers ; he rightly refused. He had to deal with many people at many levels, including experts, but he did not believe in sectarian approaches, and carefully avoided cliches. He was left untouched by the whirlpools of intrigues. There is much to improve in the machinery of government, and there

are many lags in the administration. There is need for a constant war on bureaucratism, on waste and delay and corruption. But Gandhi did not quarrel with his tools, and Jawaharlal Nehru also did not quarrel with his tools. Indira Gandhi also should not quarrel with her tools ; it would be enough if she made the best use of them."



CHAPTER IV

SOME WESTERN REACTIONS ON INDIRA GANDHI'S ELECTION

Iqbal Singh, one of the eminent journalists in London, makes the following comments in the *National Herald* in connection with the reactions of some of the western countries on Indira Gandhi's election :

“Curious, but to most Indians the election of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister seemed the most natural of things. Indeed, once she had decided to stand and had received the support of a majority of the Chief Ministers of the States of the Union and the President of the Congress, it was unthinkable that there could be any other choice. To a great many people in the West it came as something of a surprise. Surprise, first, because she happens to be a woman. For the fact is that politics in the West, even after the enfranchisement of women, still remains very much a male preserve as one can observe any day in the Mother of Parliaments looking down from the press gallery to the Chamber below. But surprise, too, because the image of Indira that the West still continues to entertain is that of a backward country—backward, that is, not only in terms of economic development, but in terms of political evolution ; and many people just could not believe that a backward country would be so liberal in its outlook on the role of women in society as to elevate one of them to the commanding height of power—and at a time when the country is faced with such vast and difficult problems both at home and abroad. This sense of bewilderment was illustrated by a rather trivial but significant incident on a popular programme on the commercial television Channel—the *Late London Show*. The compere, Mr. Benny Green asked his team of professional talkers for the night, which included Miss Nora Beloff, the political correspondent of the *Sunday Observer*, how was it that a woman could be chosen as the Prime Minister of a country in

the East where the women are supposed to be deprived of freedom, while in the West, where women are supposed to have emancipated themselves, there is no country which can claim to have a woman Prime Minister. Most of the team had no answer, but Miss Nora Beloff came out with the ingenious explanation in the course of her answer that Indians do not find anything strange about a woman becoming the Prime Minister because, after all, the Hindu religion allows for many 'goddesses' in its pantheon. And that seemed to satisfy everybody. Beyond the surprise, then, there has been the effort to get over the surprise, not by examining the facts and coming to straightforward conclusions about them, but by seeking the most complicated and even perverse explanations of what had happened and what it signifies. Here the British Press Comment, which does not necessarily reflect official views at least in this case, has seemed to be the most perverse with but rare exceptions. And perverse not only in the case of that section of the British Press which too often seems to be run by imbeciles for the benefit of imbeciles, but even in the case of paper and journals which have a reputation for sophisticated judgment. "It is the parentage rather than the sex of Mrs. Gandhi that is the most important aspect of her election as the successor of Lal Bahadur Shastri", wrote Mr. Roderick Macfarquhar in the radical *New Statesman*, adding among other things, "but it seems unfortunate that on this occasion India could only achieve consensus by a dynastic solution just when Mr. Shastri had proved that his country could throw up new leaders and did not have to be led by a Nehru." *The Economist*, too, which is not altogether approving of India's choice, counted the fact of her being "her father's daughter" among "her real political assets." And it went on to say, "Within the Congress leadership, Nehru's name is more for public than private obeisance, but it is still powerful with the Indian masses." *The Daily Telegraph* was of the same opinion in its editorial columns. *The Times* has expressed no editorial opinion, but its Man in Delhi in a biographical sketch, which was also an assessment of her personality, used the word 'modern' to describe her outlook, but only in quotes. "The word most commonly used in commending Mrs. Indira Gandhi", he observed, "is modern". To some extent the word is used comparatively to set her aside

from others who have been considered for the office in the past week, and it means that she has little interest in astrologers, sooth-sayers or sadhus, that she has no particular engrossment in diet, no quirkish resistance to such things as vaccination, that she is more committed to birth-control for India than to prohibition. For a start, this seemed a promising line of analysis. But it was not pursued very far, partly because it might have involved some reappraisal of the whole Indian political situation and the basic trends. Instead, the correspondent of the *Times* went on to put himself on the back for his pertinicity in that as early as 1958 the *Times* (presumably himself) "singled her out in a series called "people to watch". Admittedly the political reasons for her election have not been overlooked, but these, though they may be accurate as far as they go, have been rather superficial. *The Economist's* India Correspondent reported that her "victory in the succession battle is best described as a triumph for the Congress party-machine operated by the President Mr. Kamraj" and added that "paradoxically, she owes her decisive two to one victory to her rival, Mr. Morarji Desai, because the party machine would not have this strong-willed and overbearing individual whose image would also be a liability at the 1967 elections." Mr. Macfarquhar came to the same conclusion but by a somewhat different route. Mrs. Gandhi, he told his clients, was backed by the party because once Mr. Desai was determined to run, "only a Nehru could be expected to arouse enthusiasm from all sections of the Parliamentary Party and undermine Mr. Desai's appeal to particular groups." Strangely, in *The Guardian*, Miss Taya Zinkin struck a wholly eccentric note and said, "She has not been chosen because she is a Nehru—if anything being a Nehru is a handicap; Indira has had its fill of Nehru." So, the North Sea islanders can pay their money and pick their choice from the diametrically opposed sets of explanations for Indira Gandhi's victory.

"There has, of course, been some sapient comment. *The Guardian* was editorially much more to the point. After remarking that "once again Indian democracy has vindicated itself in the free and orderly choice of a national leader," it enlarged on what was meant by "national" in this context. "And in fact,"

it wrote, "the most national of the candidates has been chosen; 'national' in that she is far less than her rivals identified with a particular religion, caste, regional, linguistic, or other community. Although a Northerner, she will not want to impose Hindi as the national language faster than speaker of other languages will accept it; her family is Hindu, but Muslims need have no doubts about her devotion to her father's ideal of a secular State". *The Economist* acknowledged as much, but somewhat negatively, perhaps because lately it has been annoyed with India. "She has not made herself obnoxious to any part of the nation," it said in its piece entitled, "India's untested leader". "She comes from Uttar Pradesh, the Congress heartland, but is not closely associated with it. She is a genuine secularist like her father, which is essential if the confidence of the country's 50 million Muslims is to be maintained. She is conspicuously not a fanatic for Hindi, which is equally essential if the South Indians are to be reassured that the growth of the intended national language will not make them second class citizens." One might have thought that having recognized all these assets, political and intellectual, which Indira Gandhi possesses, her choice as successor to Lal Bahadur Shastri would have been seen by British commentators as a very happy portent and a clear indication that India's premier political party does not intend Indian policies to be involuted or regressive, but forward looking and in line with the needs of our day and age—indeed an uninhibited opening on the future. Not so, however. For a kind of ambivalence and almost inhibition seems to stand between the British mind and recognition of the essential movement of Indian polity—as much today as before the transfer of power and perhaps more so. Partly, this ambivalence and inhibition would seem to be a reflex of political preconceptions and preferences. The mass media of communications in Britain—and the West generally—today have an anti-left bias, and even the opinion-forming organs share this, including those which like to consider themselves as champions of radicalism, like *New Statesman*. One can, for instance, well understand why the *Economist*, which gives a literary intonation to the voice of the city gentry, should be worried as it seems, at to be about Indira Gandhi's being "ideologically on the left, the label that probably has rather more meaning for her than it has that

for many Congress politicians” and further because “she has shown something of her father’s preference for the public sector as against the private, and for charitable judgment of the Soviet Union against strict judgment of the capitalist West”. After all, it has persuaded into believing that “in the context of India’s economy, Mrs. Gandhi’s leanings may be less advantageous” and fears that “she will seek to undo what her predecessor was doing”. But one is by no means certain that even the *New Statesman’s* latest expert on India, Mr. Macfarquhar, who expects her to continue on the same middle-of-the-road path hewn by Shastri” is really happy that “the difference may be that if a socialist solution seems appropriate, she will be more likely than Shastri to seek it”.

“So far only the British reactions, but what about the rest of Europe, that is Europe West of the Elbe. In West Germany, understandably, there is even less welcome for the new Prime Minister of India than in the North Sea Island where at least some comfort is taken in the fact that she was educated in Britain and that English is her mother tongue. French comment has been more sympathetic, though necessarily more perfunctory. M. Jean Wetz, correspondent of *Le Monde* in Delhi, wrote an appreciation of Indira Gandhi which, without descending into embarrassing sychophoney, brought out the qualities which have endeared her to the Indian people. “An exceptional woman”, he wrote, “becomes the Prime Minister of India. Madame Indira Gandhi, despite her shyness, never retreats before difficulty. She has a horror of hurting, but she expresses her point of view with a firm politeness, and knows well how to put any unpleasant questioner in his place. Here she is at the head of “the biggest democracy in the world.” It is a test which perhaps, she has not systematically sought but for which she has all her life prepared herself. Indira Gandhi has certainly benefited always from the halo which enveloped her father. But she has arrived at power through her own resources and also because the Congress party considers her worthy of the heritage taken over by Shastri since 1964.” This may not be very profound, but at least it happens to be free from equivocation and true as far as it goes.”

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST WOMAN PRIME MINISTER OF THE LARGEST DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

In human history of the modern century there has not been any woman Prime Minister of any small or big country except that of Ceylon which was a part of India till 1947 and which is actually one tenth of the size of our sub-continent; and therefore, it has been rightly said and acknowledged by various journals all over the world that Indira Gandhi is the First Woman Prime Minister in the world and that too of the world's largest democracy. The first largest democracy, considering the population of it, is surely India because its population is just one-fourth of the entire population of the globe. Then again, India is not a Communist or a Fascist as a totalitarian country but she is a highly democratic country and culturally also most advanced although considering her vast population and also her recent attainment of political independence, she may not be economically as rich as Britain or France or Soviet Union or U.S.A. We do not know what funny and queer notions the western world holds about India inspite of India's closest contact with the majority of the Western countries either through the embassies or through the exchange of visits of the heads of the governments or through the exchange of an enormous number of students of science, arts and all branches of knowledge between India and every country or State in America and Europe. During the British rule in India, Indians used to be talked about in Europe and America as barbarous people who are not only completely devoid of light, culture, morality etc. but also who are steeped in the darkness of ignorance and superstition. Once in Germany, probably in the earliest part of the present century, a few inhabitants of 24—Parganas in Bengal were actually exhibited by being put in a cage like the wild animals implying that Indians were no better than beasts that live in the jungles. Throughout the British rule in India, the Britishers used to propagate the worst possible falsehood that

Indians are a race of snake or frog-eaters and snake-charmers or magicians, and nothing else although scholars like Max Muller and others have pointed out in their books of philosophy that India was at the summit of light and culture when Europe and the whole world was at the bottom or foot of light and culture. To disparage and talk ill of India at present when practically all the heads of the various governments of the world have visited our country atleast once and have seen for themselves how enlightened, cultured and progressive India is, it is indeed the height of bad manners and criminal falsehood on the part of any of these countries to express wonder at the election of Indira Gandhi to the Premiership or to say that she has been elected simply because she happens to be the daughter of Jawahar Lal Nehru or because the Hindu religion believes in the plurality of gods and goddesses, and therefore, it is no wonder that the Hindus have invested the Premiership in the daughter of Jawahar Lal Nehru who was the first Prime Minister of India and who ruled over India for nearly seventeen years. But the western world should know as Iqbal Singh, the eminent journalist of London, has pointed out that Indira has not been elected because of her dynastic claims but solely due to her own merits of the appreciation of those merits by her countrymen. The western world should know, as it knows already, that most of the Indian women are now-a-days as highly educated, accomplished and also capable of holding any high office as Indira Gandhi. They are actually filling in so many key positions in the administrative, legislative, judicial, legal, scientific, commercial, industrial, and even in the defence services of our country. They have proved their worth and efficiency at home and abroad in every part of the world. We want to ask the Britishers or the Europeans or the Americans if they have not come in close touch with Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, another talented woman who has worked as Ambassador or High Commissioner in U.K., U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and elsewhere. Have they found her any way inferior in brains or capacity to even Jawahar Lal Nehru of whom the western world, and particularly the British journals talk so highly? We have innumerable Indiras and Vijay Lakshmis in our country, and therefore, the Western World should not feel surprised at the election of a woman Prime Minister in this sub-continent of Asia. The Western World

should not feel jealous of our woman Prime Minister, but on the other hand, it should try to encourage, equip, and train up its own women for such high and responsible positions which Indira and other women of our country have been or are still holding. The Western World, and particularly, Britain should not suffer from such a false superiority complex which is nothing but another form of inferiority complex. The Western World, and as a matter of fact, Britain have been always dividing the Eastern world without any cause or justification, and yet to their chagrin or consternation they find that Japan, which is no larger than the British Isles, is much more advanced in science and industries and technology than most of the European countries (Russia is not a European country); they find further that Russia is now the most advanced country in the world in nuclear power and also in many of the sciences and technologies; they find, last of all, that China has become such a mighty nation during the last three decades that the whole of the Western World is now literally trembling at the regimentation of China's explosive population. In the language of Bertrand Russell, the seven hundred million Chinese even with their conventional arms can swallow up the entire armed forces of America and Europe. That is why, Britain and America have built up so many territorial defence organisations, so many military bases (nuclear and non-nuclear) in order to strangle China. But can they do it? Or have they been able to do it? It is because of China's formidable power that Pakistan's collusion with her sometimes ventures to show Pakistan's big thumb to the United Nations, and yet the United Nations seems to be purposely turning her eyes away from that big thumb because otherwise her prestige would be at stake.

DOES A WOMAN PRIME MINISTER MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE ?

Ofcourse, in Indian eyes, it makes no difference ; but in the eyes of the western world it does. Because the Western World is not yet aware of the potentialities of the fair sex, because the Western World has exploited woman only as a co-earner of the bread, either in the workshops, or in the mills,

or in the factories, or in the various offices. The Western World has been treating woman, not as man's equal but definitely as man's inferior, otherwise how is it that none of the Western Countries, in spite of their vaunted democracy, has not elected any of their women as Ambassador or High Commissioner or even as Governor or Minister or Chief Justice, not to speak of electing any of their proudest women to the position of the Prime Minister as we have done. India believes not merely in the "paper-franchise" of her womanhood; but on the other hand, she believes in actually giving woman all the opportunities and scope for proving and exhibiting her worth and ability in every sphere of life wherever her bodily and mental constitution may fit in. If Indira Gandhi has been elected as the Prime Minister of our country, the world should know that she is not the only woman of our country who deserves to be so elected or who is expected to fulfil all her high responsibilities; but there are many other women of her calibre who may not be the daughters of Prime Ministers but who can be the mothers, sisters, or wives of Prime Ministers as well as who can be Prime Ministers themselves whenever any occasion would demand them to be so.

A Prime Minister being the head of a government ought to know men and things more intimately than others; he or she should have some knowledge of administration, legislation, judiciary, health, sanitation, education, engineering, technology, agriculture, commerce and industries, defence etc. Of course, one can not be omniscient like God or a Superman; but if one possesses considerable knowledge of men and things, one would be able to function more efficiently than others as the Prime Minister of a country. Of course, it is an open secret that almost every Prime Minister, every Chief Minister, every Governor gets everything readymade with the help of the various Secretaries who actually are the technical experts and who possess the real skill and knowledge of men and things, and who help the heads of the governments in all countries with the framing of the budget, with planning, with schemes and programmes of all sorts of development—scientific, technical and pertaining to defence. But if the head of a government does not know anything about any of the aforesaid

affairs he or she can never be a successful Prime Minister or a Chief Minister or a Governor. So far skill or intelligence or capacity is concerned, there is very little difference between a man and a woman. There is no question of any trial of physical strength between man and woman, as in wrestling or boxing or in some other physical feat, in which, ofcourse, man is physiologically more competent although there are exceptions even in this field e.g. some of the Eastern and Western women have shown their skill in many of the games and sports which formerly used to be known as purely masculine games and sports. But in the field of intelligence or brains, we find absolutely no difference between man and woman. Man suffers from certain deficiencies *eg*; he is unduly imaginative, sentimental and visionary which most of the women, in any part of the world, are not; but on the other hand, who possess a good deal of practical mindedness, readiness of mind, self-control, internal and external discipline, secrecy, privacy, quickness or alertness, insight rather than foresight, justice rather than magnanimity, circumspectiveness rather than want of caution, and so many other qualities which are of great service to an administrator, a legislator, a defender of one's country. Man's disqualifications are chiefly his doggedness, his liberalism, his unusual dash and enthusiasm, his sentimentality and over-imaginativeness, his carelessness and want of self-control, and sometimes his gross laziness or undue over self-confidence—all of which go against him whenever he goes to operate as the chief of some function. The Government of a country is the household of a family in miniature. Whether one agrees with us or not, it is a fact that woman has proved herself for generations as the full master of the domestic sphere in all respects. and it has been found out also that whenever man pokes her nose into the domestic sphere he creates only disturbance and confusion. Similarly, we honestly believe that if woman instead of man is given the responsibilities of administration and legislation of a country, she would prove a far greater success than man in any part of the world. But man because of his superior physical strength and also because of his sharper cunning has been always keeping woman confined to the domestic sphere and not giving her a chance to show her ability or worth in conducting administration or in framing laws.

It is quite evident that men of the Western World, wherever there is equality between the two sexes, have proved to be far more selfish than their species in the Eastern World, although the Western World has been always accusing the Eastern World of its tyranny over the fair sex which is not at all correct if we are to judge our male attitude towards our feminine counterpart in any field or sphere of public activity. Indians may have observed *purdah* years ago; they may have debarred their women from the enjoyment of certain social or legal privileges in the distant past; they might not have even given them the light of education during certain periods of Indian history (particularly during Muslim rule in India—the Moghal rule or the Pathan rule), they might have treated their women as badly as the ancient Romans and the Greeks used to do, or even as unfairly as the Britishers or other European nations are still doing by denying certain responsible jobs to their women, particularly, because the Western male folk suffers miserably from a kind of superiority complex which is nothing but another form of inferiority complex;—they fear that if their women are given an equal position in the administration or legislation of their country, the male folk would be forever pushed into the background and would be slowly and gradually contested into a race of effeminate creatures or even eunuchs! This fear has been working very strongly in all the Western races, and that accounts for the unique absence of their otherwise highly qualified women from most of the key positions of the government of their countries. If most of the progressive countries like ours were to appoint some of their most capable women as their Prime Minister as we have elected our Indira Gandhi, they would have seen that much of the political disturbances, much of the conflicts and wars in various parts of the world, and much of the age-old ill-feelings and enmities between the nations and the countries both in the East and in the West World have greatly disappeared for the supreme reason that woman is a much more efficient administrator than man in internal and external affairs. We are throwing a suggestion to the world abroad that woman should now take up the reins of government, particularly, in the progressive countries because man has utterly failed in bringing about any kind of

harmony or peace in any part of the world. The greatest flaws in man are his ambition, his greed, his pride or vanity, his selfishness, his doggedness, his recklessness, his indiscipline, his occasional madness due to which the human world is, from time to time, torn to pieces. Shakespeare has very clearly and conclusively proved in all his tragedies the flaws of man *e.g.*, ambition in the case of Macbeth; vanity in the case of Julius Caesar; jealousy in the case of Othello; undue imaginativeness in the case of Hamlet; pure imbecility in the case of King Lear; gross bohemianism in the case of King Henry IV, vulgar passion in the case of Antony etc. We have chosen Indira Gandhi as our Prime Minister to show to the world that we male folk of India do not suffer from any superiority complex, from any kind of jealousy, malice or spite against our woman folk, and that we sincerely believe in the real equality between man and woman as we believe in socialism and secularism.

INDIRA IS NOT A PUPPET PRIME MINISTER

There have been whispers in India as well as abroad (particularly in Britain) that Indira has been elected chiefly because she happens to be the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru or because Kamraj, President of the Indian National Congress, manipulated men and things, at a psychological moment, in such a manner that Indira secured an overwhelming majority of votes against Morarji Desai, the most formidable contestant for Prime Ministership. It is unfortunate that certain persons of our country (vide the article—"Kamraj would not answer the question" by B. N. Kaul, published in the *Caravan*, March 15, 1966) have wrongly studied the character of Kamraj, who, in our opinion, is at present the best political brain of our country, and who is most selfless like Mahatma Gandhi, and who, as such, has been working only for the welfare of India and not at all for himself. It is cruel even to think that Kamraj was at first himself a candidate for the Premiership, but when he found out that his own case was hopeless, he backed Indira with his political brains, and that is why, he has succeeded in two ways—one way, by installing Indira on the seat of the Premier, and the other way, by ousting or defeating Morarji who had declared his determination for the contest.

We have nothing to say for or against anybody whoever voted Indira to this eminent position of a great democracy but we surely rejoice at heart that a woman and not a man has become the Prime Minister of our country. While speculating on the election of Indira Gandhi, some of the sneaks in our country pointed out by their whispers between themselves how Vijay Lakshmi Pandit was made an ambassador in U.K., U.S.A; U.S.S.R. and other countries simply because she happened to be the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, how Sucheta Kripalani was made the Chief Minister of U.P. simply because Chandrabhan Gupta had an eternal tussle with Kamalapati Tripathi. Whatever might have been the idle gossip, we have seen with our own eyes how efficiently Vijay Lakshmi worked as an ambassador, and how competently Sucheta is working as the Chief Minister. We, therefore, fully believe that Indira also will prove an admirable success as the Prime Minister of India whatever may be the speculation in her name. All over the world, the male mentality is most narrow-minded, mean, and even wicked. We would, therefore, request Indira to do away with the male element as far as possible in her Cabinet as well as in all the State portfolios of administration. So many women of our country are so highly educated, and some of them are taking part creditably in all the Central Services Examinations, while there are others who are practising as lawyers, doctors and even as engineers ! Why should not such brilliant women of our country be on the key positions of our administration and legislation ? Why should we think like the Western male-folk that women are inferior to men in brains or that women are incapable of performing certain duties which are exclusively male duties. Except fighting in the battlefield we do not consider any job as exclusively a male job; but even fighting, which has now-a-days become a mechanical warfare, can be conducted with equal, if not better skill, by women; and as a matter of fact, in Russia, China, Japan and partly in India too (Indian National Cadet Corps) women are taking part in most of the branches of the armed forces.

WOMEN HAVE SUFFERED ANYWHERE AND ARE SUFFERING STILL

In every part of the world women always suffered; not merely in India as it is maliciously propagated that Indians have been for centuries looking up their women like prisoners or like wild animals or like birds, within the four walls of their house so that they can not see even the light of the sun; Indians have been, as the western people say, making their women drudge like galley-slaves in the day as well as very late hours in the night; Indians have been depriving their women of every domestic, social and political right, *i. e.* Indian women have been used only as child-bearing machines or as toys for vulgar pleasure or as domestic menials—that is what the Britishers have been telling the world about the lot of Indian women. They further have been broadcasting all over the world that Indian women are not permitted to receive any kind of light or culture, any freedom in the choice of marriage, any right to divorce their partner even if he happens to be a drunkard, a debauch or a gambler, any right for a widow to remarry although men have been reserving the right to marry one hundred times, to discard their wives, to keep many wives and also maintain private concubines and also to visit public prostitutes. The question of the right of vote never arose in the case of Indian women because India had been a slave country for centuries in the hands of the Mughals, the Pathans, the Greeks, the Hindus, the Britishers, the Portuguese and the Frenchmen. Ofcourse, Indian women were enfranchised just a few years before the Partition of India or rather just a little before the attainment of our political independence. Whatever has been said about Indian women may be quite true but more true is the story of the wretchedness of the lot of the English women during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, of the women of France during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, of the women of Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Spain, Yugoslavia and other parts of Europe. But Greece and Italy being ancient seats of European culture, the condition of Greek and Italian women was not so bad during recent centuries as it was during the pre-Christian era. In those ancient times of Greece and Rome when America was completely

when Britain was either under the sea or was the den of human beasts, the Greek and the Italian women were treated as domestic chattel or as stocks and stones belonging to the household or, at most, as domestic slaves over whose life and death the head of the family (a male head surely !) had absolute rights. So, the master of the house could kill a slave, burn or strangle or put on the stocks or in the rack or poison all the women in the family on any plea whatsoever because according to the ancient Roman Law, the *pater familias* (the head of the family) had full proprietary rights not only over the women but also over the men whoever happened to belong to his family. In England the women used to be sold as slaves as in all other parts of Europe; they used to be tortured and tyrannised in any manner to please the fancy or the whim of the owner of the family; they further used to be burnt on the stakes as heretics. It was particularly the women who used to be burnt on the stakes either as witches or as heretics. It was in the eighteenth century that the English women were enfranchised, but even then, the hereditary tendency of the English male-folk did not spare any of the habitual insults or injuries which used to be inflicted upon their women folk during earlier centuries. Man is essentially a beast everywhere whether he is born in India or in England or in China or in America or in Russia or in Japan or in any other civilized or uncivilized corner of the world. But the wretchedness of the Indian women's lot lingered much longer than that of any other race except of course, the Africans who are just rising from their stupor of darkness. It is because women have suffered grievously in the hands of men all over the world, we are making a stern appeal to all the leading women of the world to be on the war path, to take the law in their own hands, to lock up their male partners or rather the entire male race of humanity within the four walls of their house, to make them work like galley slaves, to do all the menial jobs in the house, to cook, to clean the utensils, to wash clothes, to scrub or sweep the floor etc. not to see the light of the sun, to talk to no woman, to have no right to receive education or to marry, or to divorce his partner as to remarry any other partner etc. It is only then, men will be duly punished, and some justice will be done to women. It is also our earnest appeal to all the educated women of the world that they should no longer play the toy of pleasure

in the hands of men or to be merely child-bearing machines so that men will no longer be able to burden them (women) with a battalion of children. It is further our wish that every woman in the world should learn how to depend on her own legs, how to be absolutely independent of man (atleast from the economic point of view), how to be able to do every kind of job with her own hands, and last of all, how to surpass man in every sphere. Let all women give up their childish ways of decorating or beautifying themselves, of trying to look pretty in the eyes of men and to entrap their hearts. Why should men say that women are the weaker sex (even the Bible mentions woman as the weaker vessel)? Let them regard women as the fairer sex, as the stronger, the superior and the better sex. Why should man say that in woman the mother instinct is the strongest, and that is why, she submits to man whether he is a drunkard or a debauch or a gambler or something worse? Why should man be allowed to say that woman always requires somebody to protect her body? Why should woman have no self-restraint, and why should she be so easily tempted by man? It is said in Europe as well as in America that any young woman can be purchased with a *saree* or a frock, with a picture show or a motor drive or with a packet of chocolate or a pot of ice-cream, or a box of picture post-cards. Whatever is said or may be said, it is our sincerest wish that all women in every part of the world should take a vow from this very moment that they should completely unsex themselves and behave just like men, not in dress or in games and sports or even in the offices but at home too so that man may feel that he has ceased to be man and that woman has taken his place. Havelock Ellis says that every woman wants to be 'possessed'; but our advice to every man is that he should take the place of woman and crave to be 'possessed' so that woman can get the full mastery over man. Time has come when woman should 'possess' a man like a ghost. The days of man are over, and consequently, the days of woman have arrived. It is, therefore, advisable that every country like India should elect their women to the highest seat of office so that man may come to his senses and mend his ways of treating woman as a slave or a toy or a machine.



CHAPTER VI

INDIRA'S PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

Indira looks ninety per cent like her father and ten per cent like her mother. In her character and temperament too she is practically ninety per cent like her father and ten per cent like her mother. There is a superstitious belief in our country that when a daughter look like her father she becomes very lucky, while a son becomes equally lucky if he resembles his mother. If we believe in that superstition and apply it in the case of Indira's luck or destiny, we should admit that Indira has become the Prime Minister of our country simply because she resembles her father so closely in physical appearance, particularly in the features or the profile of her face, and also in her mentality and character. Napoleon used to say that he wanted only men with prominent noses simply because he believed that persons with prominent noses are intelligent, sharp and shrewd. Indira possesses a prominent but remarkably graceful nose which should testify the sharpness of her intellect, the depth of her insight in the character of men and things. Indira possesses a prominent forehead like that of her father which means that she is a great thinker like her father. Women generally possess a small or narrow forehead but Indira possesses a broad forehead which seems to reflect her power of intuition. It also indicates her magnanimous soul, her generous heart, her self-sacrificing spirit. A broad or prominent forehead is an unmistakable sign of a philosophic mind (but not a dreamer or a speculator), of a great soul that always looks upward towards Heaven *i.e.* God. That is why, a man or a woman with a prominent forehead, must be a person of greatness. An ordinary person can not have such a remarkable forehead. Indira's eyes are exceedingly pretty just like a pair of butterflies that occasionally fold or unfold their wings. Her eyes are gracefully large and also like a lotus floating on her beaming face. This sort of eyes, the physiognomists say,

are a clear reflection of the innocence, simplicity and sincerity of the heart. Indira's eyes are the richest and most enviable gift of Nature. Indira's fingers, as far as we have seen them, are long and tapering like the fingers of goddess Durga. According to the astrologers or the physiognomists, long, tapering fingers are the unmistakable marks of an artist or of a lover of beauty. We are told that Indira is a great lover of painting, of flowers, of many-coloured birds and many other beautiful objects of Nature. Indira's locks of hair are lovely and enchanting but we are not the physiognomist of man's or woman's hair. As regards the physical stature of Indira, she is above the average Indian woman but not very tall. She has the Swan-like gait which reflects her mind at ease and her soul in peace or harmony. Her complexion like her father's complexion is exceedingly bright and crimson. Her father even at seventy looked like a pink rose. We do not, however know if Indira looks like a red rose or a pink rose or a white rose. But surely, she does not look like an Indian woman considering her complexion, features, stature, gait and looks. People say that the Jewish eyes are blue, and hence, are the prettiest. Although Indira possesses black eyes yet her eyes are the prettiest. This is all about her physical personality. So far her intellectual personality is concerned, she does not exhibit it to others ; but one can feel it in all her words and actions. She may not be as quick as her father in grasping a situation, but then, after a little thought, she realises the situation more correctly than many persons. That is why, she appears to be slightly slow in her decisions. It is always the more circumspective, more cautious and probably wiser people who are slow in their conclusions as well as in their decisions. Indira too belongs to the circumspective type of thinkers and actors. Her father was not so circumspective ; he was sometimes hasty in the fits of his enthusiasm ; whenever any suggestion or proposal appealed to him, he would at once jump at it and try to translate it into action whatever it might cost him or the country. This way he committed certain blunders in undertaking certain development projects which he entrusted to wrong or unreliable or incompetent hands and which consequently failed and cost our country a good deal of financial loss. Indira would never commit such blunders because she is in the habit of thinking thrice before

she takes any leap. Ofcourse, as a woman, she has got the advantage over men, because a woman is generally endowed with the peculiar gift of choosing the right course ; a woman probably has got some uncanny sense by which she can judge certain things unerringly. Women are genarally known as the best managers, care-takers and supervisors due to which they mostly hit the mark rather than miss it. If President Johnson had sincerely consulted Indira Gandhi on the Viet-Nam problem instead of trying to know what Indira was going to do inorder to help America in quelling the North Viet-Nameese and also the Cambodians, she could have probably given him the most practical and practicable suggestion whether Johnson accepted it or not. Nobody helped her any way with suggestion or advice regarding the implimentation of the Tashkent Agreement, and yet how peacefully the whole thing has been carried out or accomplished inspite of much of uproar in India as well as in Pakistan. This is one of the signal examples of Indira's cool-headedness as well as her firmness even in very delicate and risky affairs. In the same way, she tackled the Mizo rebels and the Nagas before she had left for U. S. A. to meet President Johnson. Then again, how wisely she had decided to meet all the big fours of the world—the heads of U. S. A., France, U. K., and U. S. S. R. governments—immediately after her election to the Premiership of India.

Indira inherited from her father all his sterling qualities—love of the Indian people ; the world vision ; sense of justice ; courage ; humanitarian spirit ; determination and obstinacy. Ofcourse, because of her recent election, she has not had any opportunity for displaying or rather proving any of those sterling qualities. But then, inspite of being a woman, and particularly after so much of awkwardness created by Pakistan between U. S. A. and India, during the recent armed conflict, Indira felt perfectly at home in the company of President Johnson, Vice-President Humphrey, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk simply because of her moral courage, sense of justice and also her determination to face a crisis—the crisis of strained relationship with U. S. A. and Britain particularly. But she was wise enough to meet first of all France that plays a very important role in European politics, particularly in the politics

between the democratic countries and the Communist countries. Indira surely has a world vision like that of her father because otherwise she would have been sitting at home even now as many of the Prime Ministers and Presidents of other countries sit at home instead of caring to cultivate and promote good relations between nations, countries and races. These international contacts through the heads of the various governments are most helpful to a better understanding and a more amicable settlement of many of the intricate problems of the modern world. Like her father, Indira also must be believing in world unity, world harmony, world government, world organisation and world peace. If Indira were any way unlike her father, she would not have cared to meet the British Premier Harold Wilson particularly after those ugly scenes that preceded and followed the Indo-Pak war. Indira like her father knows the value of personal contact even with the worst possible enemy or rather with persons who are bent upon misunderstanding men and things and who harbour in their heart of heart age-old hatred, jealousy, ill-feeling and enmity.

CHAPTER VII

TUMULTUOUS WELCOME TO MRS. GANDHI IN NEW YORK

Reuter reported on the 31st of March, 1966, the following :—

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was given a tumultuous welcome when she arrived here (New York) from Washington for a formal luncheon with Mayor John Lindsay. Both Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Lindsay spoke extemporaneously at the luncheon in the Prime Minister's honour. The Mayor said of Mrs. Gandhi, "She has fitted into the New York City Community with ease and with grace and with style. She gives us lustre just by being here. We have much in common. We are both newly elected. We both started out with massive strikes. But she is much smarter than I am. Shortly after the election she left the country." The Mayor offered a toast and the guests rose to sip New York State champagne. In response Mrs. Gandhi said that in lunching with the Mayor she found out how much alike we politicians are." She added, "We face the same problems and react to them in the same way. The Mayor and I have much in common. We like people to provoke us. We are at our best under fire," she said. She then wished Mr. Lindsay success in solving the city's problems. A crowd of two hundred people cheered and applauded her as she arrived. She waved back and posed for photographers. She was received by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Chairman of the Lincoln Centre Board, and Mr. William Schuman, President of the Centre. Mrs. Gandhi went on a brief tour of the complex of buildings which forms the Centre. At one point during the tour of the Centre, a group of exuberant school children managed to break through police barricades in an effort to get a closer look at the Prime Minister. They were halted by the Police at the next barricade, but came within fifty feet of where Mrs. Gandhi was standing. During the luncheon, the Mayor and Mrs. John Lindsay presented Mrs. Gandhi with a small

vermeil rose gift from Tiffany's, the famous firm of jewellers, Mrs. Gandhi presented the Lindsays with an intricately carved walnut tea chest, containing six different types of Indian tea.

JOHNSON CAME TO DINNER

The Associated Press reported on the 31st of March, 1966 :—

The society set was still chuckling yesterday about how President Johnson broke protocol and stayed to dinner at the Indian Embassy on Tuesday night thereby "bumping" from the Table India's Deputy High Commissioner in London, Mr. P. N. Haksar. When the President arrived at the small embassy reception for Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister, about 7-30 P.M., he stayed and stayed, sitting on a sofa in the drawing-room, talking with Mrs. Gandhi and others. Such protocol visits usually last half an hour or less. Eventually, the President was asked to stay for dinner. Though he was in a business suit and other men (dinner-guests) were in black tie, Mr Johnson accepted the invitation. This required shifting of place cards in a game of protocol musical chairs. Mr. Hubert Humphrey, U. S. Vice-President, who had until then been the highest-ranking guest, gave up his place at Mrs. Gandhi's right, in deference to the President, and Mr. Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, gave up his place on Mrs. Gandhi's left. The President stayed three and a half hours at the Embassy before returning to the White House where Mrs. Johnson was abed with viral laryngitis. "I am the man who came to dinner", the President grinned.

JOHNSON-MRS. GANDHI JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The following is the text of the communique :—

At the invitation of President Johnson, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, has been on an official visit to the United States of America. During her visit, Prime Minister Gandhi met the President and members of the United States Government. The President and the Prime Minister discussed India's efforts of the improved well-being of its people. Prime Minister Gandhi emphasized the

high priority which India attaches to economic development. President Johnson assured Prime Minister Gandhi of the deep interest of the Government and the people of the United States in participating in international efforts, particularly, those under the leadership of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to assist India in its own massive efforts to raise the living standards of its people within the framework of a parliamentary democracy. The President and the Prime Minister discussed India's emergency food grain requirements resulting from last year's unprecedented drought. They agreed that the problem should be viewed, not in isolation, but in the context of an incipient world-wide food deficit, a challenge to humanity as a whole that merits the sustained and serious attention of all nations. The Prime Minister described measures which the Government of India are taking to achieve self sufficiency, in the nation's food production. The President assured her that, Congress willing, the United States will continue to participate seriously in the international effort to alleviate India's immediate food deficit problem. The President told Mrs. Gandhi that he intended to send a special message to Congress shortly to seek the endorsement of such U.S. assistance. Both of them agreed that further participation of other countries in meeting India's emergency food needs is also highly desirable. Prime Minister Gandhi welcomed the President's proposal for the establishment of an Indo-U. S. foundation to promote progress in the fields of learning. The President and the Prime Minister look to this co-operative endeavour to develop new techniques in farm and factory, to advance science and to increase research. President Johnson and Prime Minister Gandhi agreed that following the Tashkent Declaration there had already been considerable progress towards re-establishment of the conditions of peace in the sub-continent and that it is necessary that this process continues in order that peoples of both countries may concentrate their energies once again on the urgent tasks of national development. They also agreed on the importance of continuing to give full support to the United Nations' objective of refraining from the use of force and of resolving conflicts between nations through peaceful means.

During their discussion, President Johnson and Prime

Minister Gandhi reviewed recent developments in South and South-East Asia in the context of the universal desire of men and women everywhere to achieve peace that respects liberty, dignity and the pursuit of a better way of life. In this connection, the President explained the policies the United States is pursuing to help the people of the Republic of Viet-Nam to defend their freedom and to reconstruct their war-torn society. The Prime Minister explained the continuing interest and efforts of her country in bringing about a just and peaceful solution of this problem. Prime Minister Gandhi affirmed the determination of her nation to defend the freedom and territorial integrity of India and explained the challenge presented to it by the aggressive policies of the People's Republic of China. The Prime Minister and the President agreed that such aggressive policies pose a threat to peace, particularly, in Asia. The President and the Prime Minister consider that the visit has reaffirmed the strong bonds of friendship between United States and India, based upon a shared commitment to constitutional democracy and a common revolutionary heritage. Their highly informative, frank and friendly discussions have contributed to a valuable personal understanding between their two countries and their two peoples, Prime Minister Gandhi extended a warm invitation to President Johnson to visit India. The President expressed his gratitude for the invitation and he hoped that he would visit India again.

The *National Herald* of Lucknow has given very fine comments upon the Johnson—Mrs. Gandhi Joint Communique under the title “India and U.S.” :—

Indo-U.S. friendship could never be taken for granted, and Indira Gandhi, in repeating the idea, must have intended merely to remind the peoples of the two countries that they can not hereafter too take their friendship for granted. No two countries can ever take their friendship for granted; and in India's foreign relations after freedom, India's relations with the United States have been more chequered than with any other country, apart from relations with Pakistan and China. It has not been for aid asked for and refused but for lack of understanding, and Americans should be the first to admit that they have not understood Asia, especially in the

post-war world which cast heavy responsibilities on them. They did not understand even Jawaharlal Nehru, who had imbibed so much of the West; and if they could not understand him, they could not understand most else in Asia. First, they wanted him to be a kind of Chiang Kai-Shek; then they thought, he was favouring international Communism, when he was working determinedly for democracy and democratic socialism. They mistook non-alignment for double-facedness, and they misinterpreted his courage and objectivity to be cowardice and unrealism. They have understood him now, and his daughter is far more fortunate in being understood from the very beginning of her term. Were his 1949 utterances, on his first visit to the United States, puzzled and perplexed, Indira Gandhi's equally straight utterances are being appreciated. This is some progress in the relations between the two countries. The joint communique issued after the brief but what must have been easy communication between Indira Gandhi and President Johnson is candid; there is no humbug about it. It reaffirms the basis of Indo-U.S. relations; it also admits each country's independence. On the vital question of Viet-Nam, India while appreciating the U.S. desire for peace, can not avoid her responsibilities as Chairman of the International Supervisory Commission under the Geneva agreements. On the vital issue of aid to India, the need for which Indira Gandhi did not conceal and which she stressed with dignity and self-possession, the United States is willing to do the utmost she can to help the largest democracy in the world preserve its democratic process. Indo-Pakistani relations are concern of both India and the United States, and it is now tacitly understood that the best way of promoting them is not to mention plebiscite. On the large-hearted issues of peace and war, there has been sufficient agreement between the two countries. To those in this country, who look upon the United States as a big bully and a tough bargainer, there has been sufficient assurance in Indira Gandhi's utterances and signatures which recall her father's strength of character. This is the way to understanding, and understanding is the best possible basis of Indo-U.S. relations. Indira Gandhi bridged two revolutions in going from Paris to Washington. The French Revolution, apart from the links which Lafayette

adventurously established, owed much to the American Revolution, and in spite of present differences between the two countries, there is a historical bridge between them. It is good that Indira Gandhi established rapport with President de Gaulle, one of the leading statesmen of the world, who is following an independent policy as the basis of European unity. The transfer of power from France to India in French territories was a pleasant and smooth affair, and there can be greater co-operation between India and France, not only in the political, but in the cultural fields. It will be satisfying that Indira Gandhi is meeting Mr. Harold Wilson and M. Kosygin on her way back to face the problems that daily disturb India. As she has repeatedly said, we have ultimately to depend on our own strength, show sufficient unity and make a sufficient effort.

MRS. GANDHI IN PARIS

Iqbal Singh says in an article to the *National Herald* of Lucknow :—

This is not the first time that an Indian Prime Minister has visited Paris. Jawaharlal Nehru during his long and momentous stewardship of Indian affairs was here on several occasions, his last visit being in the fall of 1962, a few months before the Chinese attack on India ; and that unlike Mrs. Gandhi's two-day visit, was an official visit and not just an informal one as on this occasion. Paradoxically, however, Mrs. Gandhi's brief stop-over in the French capital on her way to Washington has aroused somewhat greater interest or at least curiosity in many chancelleries of Western Europe—and not only Western Europe—than any previous event of this kind. Why ? It cannot, of course, be that anybody is under the illusion that Mrs. Gandhi's brief talks with President de Gaulle and the French Prime Minister on Friday (March 25 '66) which lasted two hours in all and represented the sum of her official engagements in Paris, apart from the intimate luncheon given in her honour at the Elysee by the French President, could have produced any dramatic and substantive results capable of profoundly modifying the evolution of relations between India

and France. As we all know, relations between nations are not susceptible to such sudden and dramatic changes. If, therefore, Mrs. Gandhi's one afternoon of talks with the French President and his Prime Minister have been the subject of so much speculation—and here what has found its way into print or on audio-visual media of mass communications probably represents just the visible tip or the iceberg—reasons for this must be sought in something else. To begin with, they must be sought in the precise timing of Mrs. Gandhi's Paris visit. It is safe to say that if such a visit had taken place last year before the Indo-Pakistani conflict, it would have been regarded as of less consequence, not only outside France, but in France itself. It is perfectly true that Indo-French relations had been steadily, if slowly, improving ever since President de Gaulle carried out the process of decolonisation to its logical conclusion by settling the Algerian problem once and for all, but even so there seemed to be some weight of reserve on both sides which tended to inhibit this process. On the Indian side it was felt that France, like many other West European countries, was inclined to give higher priority to developing her relations with China and Pakistan than with India—the more so in the case of France because of her litigation with her Anglo-Saxon partners, on the one hand, and her continuing mistrust of the Soviet Union, on the other. On the French side, there was an *idea fixe* that India was not really interested in establishing any intimate relationship with France because she saw no profit in it for herself either in political or economic terms and that the chief effort or diplomacy was concentrated in areas other than France. Consequently, though Indo-French contacts continued to grow and multiply and were generally friendly, there seemed no urge on either side to make any systematic effort to force the pace of Indo-French cooperation in any field. Worse still, there came the Chinese attack and what was represented in the outside world, partly by our own publicity abroad, as just not a military debacle but something very much like a moral collapse and a breakdown of the whole structure of our foreign policy. In France, in particular, because of the great importance which the French Diplomacy attaches to military power as the ultimate factor in any power-equation, there was a tendency, after the reverse India suffered in the Himalayas, to

assume that Indian influence in world affairs was likely to decline for a long time to come. As such French diplomacy, while continuing all the normal politenesses, saw no particular need for going out of its way to seek any expansion of Indo-French relations. Indeed after Jawaharlal Nehru's death, the continuing decline of India's influence and power was not only taken for granted in France as in most West European countries, but there was almost an expectancy of disintegration of Indian polity.

It can not be said that this pessimistic assessment of India's prospects has even today given place to a more realistic appreciation of India's predicament—atleast in so far as can be judged from public comment on and discussion of Indian developments. The tendency continues to be to see every disaster that happens in India out of proportion and to assume that the end can not be far. Certainly, there is an incorrigible habit of exaggerating India's failures and ignoring her achievements and to credit her with far less national resilience than historically she has shown herself to be capable of summoning up the face of disaster. This has been reflected even in the comment that has appeared in the French Press during Mrs. Gandhi's present visit to Paris. Thus on the day Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Paris, the influential and highly sober paper *Le Monde* had an editorial headed India's difficulties. It was certainly not inspired by ill will or malice towards India. If anything one could say that it was meant to arouse the sympathy of its readers for India and for Mrs. Gandhi in the heavy tasks and responsibilities she had taken on her shoulders. There was certainly a desire on the part of the leader-writer to enlighten the public about the current Indian situation and its back-ground. Nevertheless, the whole argument seemed to reduce itself into a cataloguing of the difficulties that are besetting her at the moment and the failures of her policies in the various fields over the years. Now, there is nothing wrong with informing the French public opinion of India's problems or about drawing up a balance-sheet of her failures and successes, both at home and abroad. Indeed, that would be perfectly legitimate. But where the perspective loses all validity is when you can not see the wood for the trees and

when there is a refusal to recognise in the Indian predicament anything beyond her immediate embarrassment or defaults of policy. India, after all, is not the only country which has been plagued with these difficulties, nor is her economy the only one that needs being buttressed by foreign aid. French economy too starting from a much more viable level, was not so long ago dependent on heavy support from the United States under the Marshall Plan which, as M. Paul Borel reminded the readers of *Le Monde* in the same issue, unlike aid to India, consisting of eighty per cent as outright gifts and twenty per cent as loans of India. This fact, however, seems to be overlooked even in intelligent comment on India in the French Press—and not only the French Press but the Western Press generally. Demonstrably, there is here an area of blindness of optics and perversity of judgment which will continue to inhibit the normal evolution of Indo-French relations.

At the same time, however, it would be wrong from this to draw any purely negative conclusions. For one thing, it is not being unduly optimistic to suggest that thinking in French official circles is somewhat ahead of what one might guess from reading informed comment. Since the events of last September, for instance, there has been some revision of judgment at the highest level of India's military strength, and this, in turn, has led to some political reappraisals. It is no longer taken for granted that because of her inability to defend even her own frontiers her influence in world affairs must necessarily suffer a continuing decline. On the contrary, it is no longer doubted that she possesses both the will and reserves of national unity and strength to meet the kind of challenges that she faced last autumn; that the lessons of 1962 have been learnt by her people; and that she remains the most viable political entity in the "Third world". This being so, the need for establishing closer understanding with her is now accepted at *Quai d'Orsay*—and even more so at the Elysee. This reorientation of attitude towards India has been further helped by some rethinking of her foreign relations in Delhi. French diplomacy had for long assumed that even after the transfer of power, India remained subject to the psychological hegemony of the Anglo Saxon Powers, and it is only fair to add that this assumption was not

wholly groundless, and India's conduct of her foreign policy did tend for years to attach greater weight to the role of London and Washington than Paris. There were, of course, perfectly good reasons why this was so ; but equally one could well understand why, apart from other factors, this built-in bias of Indian policy should have deepened French reserve in dealings with India, especially after the advent of the Fifth Republic under General de Gaulle. However, the disenchantment in Delhi with the Anglo-Saxon policies ; which has not passed unnoticed in Paris, has led French diplomacy to believe that possibly the time is psychologically ripe for strengthening Indo-French relations—not because this has to be done at the cost of India's relations with the Anglo-Saxons, but because the mood in India is more receptive.

All these factors have combined to give an added significance to Mrs. Gandhi's brief stay in Paris and her talks with President de Gaulle and M. Pompidou, the French Prime Minister. This significance is not to be measured by any practical agreements that may or may not have been brought nearer because of these talks. That was not the purpose. The purpose was for Mrs. Gandhi and the French President to have an exchange of views, not only on world problems in which both countries have a vital interest, but to know from each other how they conceive the development of Indo-French relations in the period ahead. And there is no question that the talks were conducted in an exceedingly warm atmosphere of cordiality and comprehension. This warmth was reflected even through the opaque language of formality which is usual on such occasions. General de Gaulle is not a man who uses words to no purpose or lightly, and one may take it that when he expressed his hope and desire in his speech of the Elysee luncheon to see India and France come closer together and "to associate to act in common", he seriously meant something more than just development of trade and cultural relations or even the kind of system of consultation at the Foreign Ministers' level which now both Delhi and Paris have accepted as the regular pattern of their diplomatic contacts. There is obviously need on both sides to explore the fields in which the two countries can act in common. Admittedly, there are

points of divergence as well as points of convergence in Indian and French policies, and it would be naive to overlook the former. On the Indian side, France's tendency to see Chinese policies in more favourable light than facts warrant (though the British do the same) and to be neutral on the Pakistan side on certain occasions is bound still to give rise to some uncertainty. Equally, the French can legitimately wonder how far India can fully develop her initiatives in international affairs while she remains economically so dependent on American aid. But these doubts and uncertainties no longer represent a major obstacle to Indo-French understanding being reinforced and to the building of a stable basis for Indo-French cooperation of a very wide-ranging order.

MRS. GANDHI REPORTS TO PARLIAMENT ON HER TOUR

The following is the text of Mrs. Gandhi's statement :—

As the house is aware, I paid an official visit to the United States from March 28 to April 1, in response to an invitation from President Johnson. On the way, I broke journey at Paris where I met President De Gaulle and Prime Minister Pompidon. On the return journey I met Prime Minister Wilson in the course of a brief stop-over in London. I also made a halt at Moscow where I had discussions with Chairman Kosygin. In Paris, I was received with much warmth and cordiality. President de Gaulle showed deep interest in our economic problems and assured me of the earnest desire of the French Government and people to help us in dealing with them ; in particular, the French Government is ready to help develop further cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between our two countries. A team of French technical experts is visiting India soon in pursuance of this objective. My talks with the French President revealed a full understanding of our position on various international issues and a substantial area of agreement between France and India on many issues. I feel sure that my meeting with President de Gaulle will further strengthen the close and friendly relations between our two countries. Our President has already invited President de Gaulle. The house will recall that sometime back

(towards the end of last year) Mrs. Pandit personally conveyed the invitation from the President when she visited France as our special envoy. I hope, President de Gaulle will find it convenient to visit our country. He will be a very welcome and honoured guest.

Before coming to the main points of discussion with President Johnson and the impressions of my visit to the United States, I should like to take this opportunity to tell the house of the great warmth and graciousness of the hospitality and courtesy shown to me by President Johnson and the American people, and to express my sincere thanks to them for it. I had full and frank discussions with President Johnson and his colleagues and the broad substance of our discussions is set out in the joint communique issued at the end of the visit. A copy of the communique is placed on the table of the house. I should perhaps mention briefly the general spirit in which our talks took place. In the fast changing world of today such meetings are necessary even between friends who share many values in common. Our object was primarily to establish a close rapport and understanding and not to exchange advice or favours. I believe that in this we succeeded in full measure—an outcome which owes much to the complete candour and mutual confidence with which we approached our task. The conversations ranged over a wide field. President Johnson expressed understanding and appreciation of our own massive efforts to raise the living standards of our people. He assured me of the deep interest of his government in continuing to assist us in our efforts to promote such development, by playing its full part in the consortium which has existed for some years to mobilise external support for our plans under the auspices of the world bank. On our emergency needs for food, President Johnson sent an urgent message to the U. S. Congress immediately after our discussions, seeking Congressional approval for generous additional supplies of food-grains, cotton and other agricultural commodities. The message set our economic progress and current problems in perspective. I am sure, the house would like to join me in expressing our appreciation at its speedy passage through the U. S. Congress. During our talks on India's food problem President Johnson

likewise displayed a sympathetic understanding and appreciation of our efforts to help ourselves of the promise of our plans for increasing agricultural production and of our programmes for population control.

The President also announced the establishment of an Indo-U.S. foundation to help develop new techniques in farm and factory to advance science and to extend research facilities. Such a proposal had in fact been under consideration for quite some time and was approved by the Government about a year ago. The foundation will be administered in a manner consistent with the Government of India's educational plans and programmes and with a view to furthering the national interest and the health of the economy. As the house is aware, we view external assistance only as a means of supplementing our own efforts and as an aid towards achieving self-reliance in the shortest possible time. In the course of our talks, President Johnson repeatedly stated that the United States views its assistance to us in the same spirit of promoting self-help and early self-reliance on our part without interfering with our policies or our plans.

There was reference to India's relations with Pakistan during the talks. I reiterated India's desire to promote friendliest of relations with Pakistan in keeping with the Tashkent spirit, despite the difficulties created. We agreed that the peaceful processes set in motion by the Tashkent Declaration should be continued. President Johnson expressed his strong support for the Tashkent Declaration and his desire that there should be friendship between India and Pakistan. Reference was also made to the threat posed to India's security by China's aggressive designs and postures. Apart from reaffirming our determination to defend our freedom and territorial integrity against any threat, from whatever quarter it may come, I emphasized the fact that the long-range challenge of China is as much political and economic as military. I also explained that India's gigantic effort to attain the goal of democratic socialism and of achievements in the field of development in conditions of stability, was itself a notable contribution to peace. The situation in Viet-Nam was briefly discussed. I

reiterated India's continuing desire to see a just and peaceful solution of this problem. I have extended an invitation to President and Mrs. Johnson to visit India, and the President has expressed the hope that it would be possible for him to visit India again.

In New York I had a useful meeting with the Secretary-General U. Thant at the United Nations, and I took this opportunity to address the Afro-Asian group. Besides the discussions, which I had with President Johnson and his colleagues, I had occasion during my stay in the United States to meet and share my thoughts with a large number of distinguished American citizens in the course of various public engagements. I reiterated our stand on Kashmir and its wider implications. These contacts, I think, have helped to promote a better understanding of our views by the American people. On my way back from the United States, I had a meeting with Prime Minister Wilson in London. Our talks covered many subjects and were held in a friendly atmosphere. They have resulted in a better understanding of India's position. Mr. Wilson expressed the British Government's readiness to join other countries in giving urgent consideration to immediate steps for providing further economic assistance to India as soon as possible. I have invited Mr. Wilson to visit India, and he has accepted the invitation. In Moscow I had a valuable exchange of views with Chairman Kossygin in the course of which we reviewed the international scene, and in particular the developments following the signing of the Tashkent Declaration. As the house is aware, Indo-Soviet co-operation in the economic and other fields has grown steadily during the past many years. A number of projects are currently under the execution with Soviet assistance, and the Bokaro steel-plant has been added to the list very recently. The Soviet Union continues to take a friendly and sympathetic interest in our Fourth Plan, and during our talks in Moscow, we agreed that the preliminary discussions, which we have already had in this regard, will be expeditiously pursued. The Chairman and Mrs. Kossygin have agreed to visit India later this year. This will give us yet another opportunity to strengthen the bonds of friendship and good-will between our two countries. I was reluctant to be

away from India even for a brief period when Parliament is in session and at a time when we have many pressing problems to tackle at home. But as the house will appreciate despite the urgency of our tasks and the underlying friendship of other nations towards us, it is necessary to develop contacts at the personal level from time to time with the leaders of countries with which we have established strong ties of co-operation and understanding. I have every hope that my discussions during this visit abroad will advance the cause of friendship and co-operation not only between our respective countries but also in the wider comity of nations. Mr. Speaker, throughout my ten day visit, I found abundance of friendship and good will for India and a growing understanding of the significance of India's foreign policy and of its developmental efforts. We can derive satisfaction and strength from these manifestations of friendship. But we must never forget that there is no substitute for hard and determined effort and sacrifice on the part of the Indian people. The nations of the world are watching the Indian experiment and they will respect us and be willing to assist us only in the measure of our own effort and sense of dedication. This is the task to which we must now as before address ourselves with faith and confidence in the capacity of our people to shape the destiny of India. Thank you, Sir."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TASHKENT DECLARATION

The Tashkent Declaration signed by Lal Bahadur Shastri and General Ayub Khan is a historic Agreement between two countries *i.e* between India and Pakistan which refers to the implementation of the Cease-Fire Order issued by the Security Council of the United Nations on the armed conflict between Pakistan and India. This historic agreement cost one precious life—the life of our previous Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri; and most of us feared that the implementation of the Tashkent Agreement or Declaration would cost us more; but for Indira Gandhi our present Prime Minister, Swaran Singh, our present Minister for External Affairs, and Chavan, our present Defence Minister – the last two of whom were present at Tashkent throughout while the historic Agreement was being discussed, prepared and signed in presence of the Russian Prime Minister M. Kosygin. It is chiefly due to the most truthful and convincing arguments or statements of our Defence Minister as well as of our External Affairs Minister put forward before the Parliament in reply to many knotty questions raised by the various members of the Parliament that chiefly helped the peaceful and successful implementation of the Tashkent Agreement. We shall quote below first of all some of the great continental reactions or rather world reactions to the Tashkent Declaration from which our readers will be able to judge the real significance and importance of the historic Agreement and also realise the great possibilities of risks involved in the implementation of the Agreement. Iqbal Singh, an eminent journalist of London, points out most correctly the Western reactions to Tashkent, and chiefly the French and the British reactions in the following words :—

“The death of Lal Bahadur Shastri within a few hours of the signing of the Indo-Pakistan agreement at Tashkent has inevitably over-shadowed the event itself. Not that there has been no comment on the Accord and what it signifies, but the

tone if not the substance, of the comment was bound to be modified by the fact that one of the principal actors in the Tashkent drama was struck down at the very moment when he had achieved one of the most difficult and delicate missions he had ever undertaken. Nevertheless, Western reactions to the agreement negotiated at Tashkent have been sufficiently revealing to merit analysis. To begin with, practically everybody, both at the official level and the non-official but inspired, was taken completely by surprise. Surprise not only that an agreement of sorts had been reached, but by far-reaching and positive character of the accord. For Western chancelleries as well as the influential body of public opinion had persuaded themselves that nothing substantial would come out of the Tashkent talks, and one even got the impression that they did not wish anything to come out of them. Western reporters in Tashkent, and even some non-Western ones, who were covering the talks were almost uniformly pessimistic about the prospects. Even as late as Sunday, January 9, all dispatches from Tashkent were modulated on a note of exhilarating gloom. The conference, it was suggested, was about to end in a total fiasco. This pessimism was partly wishful, partly due to the source of information on which Western correspondents seem principally to have relied. It was a defective source, and as a result, the Western public was wholly unprepared when it found that newsmen at Tashkent who had, only a few hours earlier, been predicting breakdown of the talks between President Ayub Khan and the late Prime Minister of India, had gone into reverse gear and were cabling that an agreement had been reached and duly signed; that, after all, the Soviet Union, whose good offices had made the Tashkent meeting possible, was not going to suffer a diplomatic set-back as Britain and the United States had done on several occasions in the past when they had tried their hands at mediation. Ofcourse, polite and welcoming noises had to be made, though this does not seem to have been always easy. For instance, in Bonn, official spokesmen were reduced to a gloomy silence. Understandably. They more than even the British had wanted the talks to fail, not only because somewhere at the back of their minds there was the feeling that an agreement of the kind that was reached at Tashkent undetermined some of their irredentist claims and

Cold War attitudes, but because they feared, the agreement would enhance the prestige of the Soviet Union. As *Die Welt*, a paper which reflects the news of the Erhard-Schroder school of thought, lamented, "With the success of their arbitration (*sic*) in the Capital of Uzbekistan, the Soviet have gained an influence in the Security Council of the United Nations over all questions concerning Asia. The fact that two members of the great Commonwealth family, have received a guarantee of Soviet peace at the very moment when the Commonwealth itself is threatened with disintegration is not just a prestige success for the present Kremlin hierarchy." And the *New Ruhr Zeitung* of Cologne, which is sympathetic to the social Democratic opposition, though more restrained and sophisticated, made the point that among the three results which the Soviets had obtained was that they had proved to the people of Asia that conflicts could be settled peacefully and thus vindicated their thesis on peaceful co-existence which Peking denies (presumably, though the leader-writer did not say so, he meant Bonn, too).

"Official reaction in Paris was positive and genuinely welcoming—certainly much more so than in Bonn. The *Elysee* is very reticent in such things but on the morrow of the agreement M. Zorin, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, had a meeting with General de Gaulle and later told the pressmen he met that the President had expressed his satisfaction with the results of the Tashkent conference. Unofficial comment was less welcoming, though it admitted that the agreement was a success for Soviet diplomacy. "It is a great victory for Moscow," wrote *Le Monde* editorially, "that Soviet territory should have been chosen by India and Pakistan to establish a new *modus vivendi* after the battle...Soviet intervention constitutes an important factor in the totality of Asian politics. To begin with, it buries the British Empire in India for a second time; the Commonwealth had not been in a position to furnish the two successor States of the empire the ground on which to liquidate their conflict." Moreover, and above all, it halts the Chinese push in Central Asia. Peking had thought, it could play Pakistan against India. "But it did not fail to point out that the Kashmir problem was not solved at Tashkent." But what of the British reactions to Tashkent? In a sense, it can

be said that they have been as one might have expected them to be; and in a sense, it can be claimed that they have not been what one might have expected. The paradox is interesting because it reflects a change in the British outlook and even character which has reached a point where it can no longer be concealed. It was to be expected that the British would view the Tashkent meeting with mixed feelings, with the mixture inevitably loaded in the direction of distaste and disapproval. After all, they could hardly be expected to smile at a situation in which two major commonwealth countries, which they still regard as their sphere of influence, not only refusing their good offices with which they have been at all times prodigal but actually accepting the good offices of a rank outsider. A rank outsider, moreover, whom they have tried their utmost to quarantine and around which for generations they have tried to build up a psychological, political and military cordon *sanitaire* — and especially where the subcontinent is concerned. “How strange and intolerable it would have seemed to Curzon”, wrote the *Times* in a leader which said more, for once, in the lines than between them, “that the affairs of the subcontinent he ruled should be taken to Tashkent to be discussed under the patronage of a Russian.” Certainly, very strange, though that in itself must be an argument for the British Establishment and its most responsible organ to consider whether there is not something fundamentally ill-conceived in the terms of reference within which they judge world events and formulate their attitudes and policies. But what seems stranger still is that somebody presiding over the affairs of Britain should have allowed his feeling of sour grapes to become obvious to the naked eye as Mr. Harold Wilson did.

While President Johnson was reported to have welcomed the agreement warmly, the British Prime Minister damned it with faint praise—and indeed, something less. Speaking at London airport before taking the plane for Lagos he said, “I gather that there has been a limited agreement on the first limited objective, which we always felt was a good one to go for, namely, the withdrawal of troops to their pre-fighting positions. This would not be easy to get. I think that as far as it has gone, the agreement is satisfactory, and is to be welcomed.” Clearly, he could hardly have been deprecatory.

True, the leader-writers in the British press have not been quite so obviously churlish in their comment on the Tashkent accord. They have put a brave face on it and some of them have managed to pay a tribute to M. Kosygin's disinterested diplomacy in not only making the Tashkent meeting possible, but acting as a catalyst in the process of hammering out the agreement. "The Tashkent talks—until the news of Mr. Shastri's death—had turned out better than most people dared hope", wrote the *Guardian*. "The credit for that is due to the skill and persistence of M. Kosygin and to the good sense and good will of the two principals, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan." Even the *Daily Telegraph* brought itself to say that the news from Tashkent was 'gratifying'. However, behind the words of welcome one has been able to sense certain weighty reservations. To begin with, having found that their pessimism about the prospect of an agreement of Tashkent has been belied by events, they have retreated to a second line of pessimism. From the *Times* to *New Statesman* (which in any case has been shockingly ill-informed on Indian affairs in the recent period, not to say partisan against India) there has been scepticism whether, in fact, the agreement will be implemented, especially when one of the architects of the agreement has disappeared from the stage. "Mr. Shastri's death", wrote the *Times* last Tuesday, reopens questions that his last days were patiently devoted to solving" and, apparently, its misgivings on this point have not been altogether removed even by Mr. Nanda's declaration that India intended to implement loyally and faithfully. Indeed it found Mr. Nanda's statement itself to be a cause for misgiving. "It might be said in parenthesis", it wrote returning to the theme four days later "that tradition in these matters should not have required any such affirmation, irrespective of the death of a signatory". If the affirmation had not come, one wonders whether the *Times* would have felt more reassured. But then, where India is concerned the British media of propaganda and publicity have such closed minds that nothing we can do will ever be regarded as satisfactory by them. That apart, they have been exercised over another matter. One theme that has been running throughout British comment—and again from the *Times* down to the left-wing *New Statesman* and *Tribune* and

even the *Daily Worker* (which taking its cue from Peking in this matter bemoaned that the people of Kashmir were not represented at Tashkent) that basically no problem has been resolved by the Tashkent agreement because 'the problem' of Kashmir remains unsolved. Why this insistence on 'the problem' of Kashmir? Partly no doubt, to refresh the memory of the British public lest they forget. But there seems to be a sinister undertone to this harping on Kashmir which must be noted. It is almost as if it is intended to make it more difficult for President Ayub Khan to persuade his public to accept the Tashkent agreement and make its implementation possible. One gets the impression that even if the Pakistan government and people could somehow bring themselves to accept the reality as it is in Kashmir, their British friends are determined that they should not do so. We may even reach the paradoxical situation where both India and Pakistan have composed their differences through a spirit of accommodation and realism, but the British Government and the British press, both that belonging to the Establishment and that representing the Counter-Establishment, would continue to insist that the litigation is not yet over. Understandably: for it is this litigation which has allowed India and Pakistan to be manipulated by the British for so long after the transfer of Power."

TASHKENT ACCORD : TRIUMPH OF PEACE AND GOOD-WILL

Swaran Singh, our Minister of External Affairs says :—

"I was privileged to be associated with our late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent during his mission of peace. The week that we spent in Tashkent was unforgettable. They were days of meetings, negotiations and sincere efforts to reach understanding and meeting of minds. The Prime Minister and his colleagues worked as a team, determined to see the establishment of peace and goodwill between India and Pakistan. We were all proud to work under his inspiring leadership. After strenuous efforts in which Chairman Kosygin played a most notable good offices role, President Ayub Khan and Prime Minister Shastri were able to reach

agreement on a Declaration which was signed in Tashkent on January 10. In the Tashkent Declaration, India and Pakistan have chosen to turn away from mutual conflict and have resolved to base their relations on peace, friendship and good neighbourliness. This in itself is a remarkable achievement which reverses the trends of the past seventeen years and marks a new era in the relations between the two countries. The central point of the whole declaration is the renunciation of force by both sides for the settlement of their disputes. For many years in the past, India had emphasized the importance of a no-war declaration by both countries, to the effect that all differences and disputes between them should be settled peacefully without resort to arms. Unfortunately, no agreement could be reached on such a declaration between India and Pakistan all these years. It is a tribute to the statesmanship and sincerity of purpose of the President of Pakistan and of Prime Minister Shastri that at last both countries have agreed not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means. It has always been our view that it is only in an atmosphere of freedom from tension and of goodwill created by such a declaration that both sides could reach solutions to the problem between them. Article I of the Tashkent Declaration seeks to embody the agreement regarding renunciation of force. The crucial sentence, therefore, reads "they reaffirm their obligation under the Charter not to have recourse to violence and to settle their disputes through peaceful means". The greater part of the discussions in Tashkent centred round this basic question. Prime Minister Shastri made it clear that the main issue was whether or not the two countries wanted to settle their disputes peacefully. He insisted on a clear affirmation that there shall be no resort to force. The Pakistan position was that any declaration would be valueless unless there was a political settlement or a self-executing machinery for the settlement of the Kashmir question was set up. Eventually, after a great deal of discussions there was agreement that the declaration should specifically mention agreement on non-use of force as a means of settling any disputes between the two countries. This has been done by a categorical reaffirmation of the obligation which both countries have, as members of the United Nations, to refrain in their mutual relationship

from the threat or use of force. Article II of the Declaration provides for the withdrawal of all armed personnel of the two countries not later than February 25, 1966, to the pre-August 5 positions, as required in U.N. Resolution. Prime Minister Shastri gave the fullest consideration to all aspects of the question of withdrawals before agreeing to this clause. He very carefully examined his letter of September 14 to the UN Secretary General in which he had stated "that when consequent upon the cease-fire becoming effective further details are considered, we shall not agree to any disposition which will leave the door open to further infiltrations or prevent us from dealing with infiltrations that have taken place". The late Prime Minister and the entire Indian delegation felt that the conditions laid down by the Prime Minister had been completely met by Pakistan's agreement not only to withdraw all armed personnel, but also to respect, after withdrawals, the cease-fire terms on the cease-fire line and the undertaking of non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Prime Minister Shastri had made it clear, on more than one occasion that if the question of Kashmir was raised by President Ayub, he would have to reiterate India's view point and this is exactly what he did as Article I of the Declaration indicates. The important point is that though the view points of both countries on Kashmir continue to be irreconcilable, both sides have nevertheless agreed not to take recourse to arms over this or any other question. There are provisions in the Declaration which refer to normalisation of relations and discussion of various other problems. It is hoped that for a consideration of these, joint Indo-Pakistani bodies will be constituted. Meetings at ministerial and heads of government level are also contemplated. All these are very salutary provisions. It is only in these ways that we can tackle the various outstanding problems between the two countries. More important than the words of the Declaration is the spirit underlying it. We are confident that the Tashkent Declaration, signed by the two heads of government and witnessed by the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, embodies the spirit of peace and goodwill on which future relations between the two countries can be based to the lasting benefit of

their peoples it is our intention to implement the declaration faithfully. We have already initiated the steps for the normalisation of relations between the two countries. Our High Commissioner to Pakistan is returning to his post. The Pakistan High Commissioner has already arrived in Delhi. The three Chiefs of Services from both countries are going to meet shortly. The direct contacts between Defence Chiefs will not only facilitate withdrawals but will also consider measures to ensure tranquility on the Indo-Pakistan borders in the East and the West as well as across the Cease-fire line. The Tashkent Declaration is a tribute to the vision and statesmanship of the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India. Equally, one can not but recognise the tremendous contribution which was made by M. Kosygin who not only sponsored the idea of the conference but also, at all stages and particularly when difficulties arose, acted as a messenger of peace and helped to resolve all obstacles. He did not propose, much less impose, any particular solutions. Yet without his good-offices, the Tashkent Declaration could not have taken shape. The Tashkent Declaration is a declaration of peace and good will between India and Pakistan. It has been hailed all over the world as a great act of statesmanship and as a significant contribution to world peace. Dozens of messages of congratulations have been received from heads of Government and States all over the world. The Tashkent Declaration if implemented sincerely and earnestly, will make an immeasurable contribution to the happiness of millions of people in the sub-continent and to peace in Asia and the world. Both India and Pakistan can use their resources for economic development and for the betterment of the standards of living of their peoples. The dangerous tensions which have characterised the relations between the two countries will be eliminated. Both countries will be able to conserve their resources for peaceful economic development. Their security will be strengthened by the assurance of peace flowing from the Declaration. Virtual agreement on the text of the Tashkent Declaration was reached at midnight of the 9th January. The next day Prime Minister Shastri felt greatly relaxed and entertained President Ayub at a quiet lunch a couple of hours before the Declaration was actually signed. No one who saw him that afternoon looking

hale and hearty feeling obviously happy at the triumph of peace and good will, would have had any inkling of the impending tragedy. The Tashkent Declaration is a monument to Prime Minister Shastri's wisdom, statesmanship and love of peace. This Declaration is his last gift to our nation. He wanted us to work for peace as steadfastly and courageously as we had fought to preserve our honour and integrity. It is upto us to live upto his expectations. All of us, in whatever walk of life and wherever we are, at the Centre or in the States, in towns or in villages, should dedicate ourselves to working for the basic objectives of peace and amity between India and Pakistan embodied in the Tashkent Declaration."

Mrs. Gandhi is indeed very lucky that we have very peacefully and successfully implemented atleast the withdrawal of the armed forces to their pre-August 5 positions. In our opinion, even without the Tashkent Declaration India would have agreed to the withdrawal of her armed forces although she was the victorious but not the aggressive party ; India would have agreed chiefly out of her love of peace and secondly, out of her consideration of the various development projects she has undertaken inorder to improve her economy which otherwise would have been greatly retarded or set back as they were set back during the Chinese aggression on India. Pakistan too, even without the Tashkent Declaration would have positively agreed to the withdrawal of her armed forces simply because she knew that she was on her last legs, and that she would have been completely annihilated if she had continued her aggressive war against India even for a fortnight more in open defiance to the Cease fire order of the Security Council. But then, the Tashkent Declaration would have never come into existence if China had struck India again in January, 1966 as it was feared by Britain as well as by U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. That is why, probably, U. S. S. R. invited Pakistan and India to discuss and come to terms between themselves at best for the time being so that China might not step into the arena and complicate the situation. China, ofcourse, has not the least sympathy or friendliness for Pakistan or for any other country in the world. She had been inciting Pakistan to raid Jammu and Kashmir so that both of them might share the loot, and then, if possible, to

invade India further jointly so that India might be much humiliated in the eyes of Asia, and China might be able to rise proportionately high in the eastern horizon. But China feared U.S.A. and also U.S.S.R. either of whom would have positively helped India if China had opened any major conflict against India. Both Britain and U.S.A. watched the game, and that is why, both of them were highly pleased when they found that U.S.S.R. invited Pakistan and India to sign a sort of a no-war pact at least for some time to come as it was originally proposed by Jawahar Lal Nehru more than once but unfortunately rejected by General Ayub probably due to the influence exerted upon him (Ayub) by some of his ambitions, intriguing, evil advisers. Indira Gandhi is really fortunate that the Indian Parliament or any of the political parties in India did not try to expose the real psychology behind the Tashkent Declaration, namely, to make a temporary patch-work of peace between Pakistan and India with a view to solve some of their mutual problems amicably rather than by arms as Pakistan tried twice to snatch away Kashmir by the force of arms. So far the Kashmir problem is concerned, it remains even now where it was eighteen years ago. Even if there be some provision in the Tashkent Declaration for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem, there is no guarantee that Pakistan will not use arms again in order to settle the question as she has already shown clear signs of her coercive attitude by inviting recently the two Military Chiefs of China and also by parading the Chinese tanks and aircrafts at Rawalpindi. Mrs. Indira Gandhi did the right thing by pointing out these two incidents to President Johnson and also to Prime Minister M. Kosygin during her recent visits to U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. If Russia is really antagonistic to China, (which we doubt very much because both of them are major communist countries), China will never dare strike India again although she may repeatedly instigate Pakistan to create some trouble for India in order to hamper her development programmes. It is really a mystery to us why even after having seen all the open marks of Pakistan's collusion with China, U.S.A. is tolerating Pakistan and even helping her as much as she has been helping an absolutely neutral country like India. Of course, Britain's policy has been always towards the whole world a policy of duplicity which she is following even now towards India, although Britain has

her vital trade interests in Pakistan and very little of such interests in India because India is having her own industries whereas Pakistan is depending absolutely on Britain for all her consumer goods. But Britain should remember that Pakistan is not at all faithful or loyal in any sense, because Pakistan believes in hunting with hound and in running with the hare, because Pakistan is jealous and also constantly suffers from an inferiority complex. President Ayub Khan while signing the Tashkent Agreement must have thought that by such an agreement he was not only obeying the Cease-fire orders of the Security Council, not only saving Pakistan from a great economic and military collapse but also keeping the door open to the Kashmir dispute. He knew further that in international politics, all pacts, agreements, declarations, understandings *etc.* are nothing but mere scraps of paper, and hence, whenever it would suit Pakistan's convenience, he would be able to revive all the hornets of the Kashmir and other knotty problems which have been plaguing India and Pakistan ever since the Partition of this sub-continent. He knew further that the best way of gaining Pakistan's interests was sometimes to humour Russia, sometimes to flatter U.S.A. or U.K., and sometimes also to flirt with China in order to frown at all the three big powers—U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and U.K. That is the real significance of the Tashkent Declaration in the eyes of Pakistan.

Indira Gandhi is fortunate enough in tiding over also the most difficult Punjabi Suba problem which actually threatened the disintegration of the Punjab and actually cost also much of the precious life and property of the people. There was a great tug-of-war between the two formidable Sikh leaders—Master Tara Singh and Master Fateh Singh—both of whom have a large following among the Sikhs who are the greatest heroes of our country. What Jawahar Lal Nehru could not accomplish his daughter Indira has done, namely, the settlement of the Punjabi Suba which appeared to be as knotty a problem as the problem of Kashmir or as the Hindu-Muslim problem during pre-partition days. It shows how much of diplomatic skill Indira possesses. Her superiority over her father lies in her patience, her coolness and her circumspective look—all of which

are great assets to a political leader. It was feared that there would be a great split between the Sikhs and the Hindus of the Punjab as the result of the Punjabi Suba dispute; but then, how amicably the dispute has been settled although other states also, particularly, the Southern States of India might raise a similar question of partition between the Southern States and the Northern States on the language issue. The Americans fought for one hundred years between the Southern and the Northern States, and history can tell how much of blood-shed of human life and destruction of material property was caused by the long war of American independence which was in reality a racial war between the Northern and the Southern States. Let us pray to God that on the language issue our country may not be involved into a similar strife between the Northern States and the Southern States, particularly because some of the Northern people fanatically want to thrust Hindi upon the Southern people while some of the Southern people want to thrust English upon the whole of India. That is why, Nehru very wisely suggested that English would be retained as an associate language so long the non-Hindi-speaking (mostly the South Indians) are not able to pick up the Hindi language. But we hope that the language problem has been finally settled, and there will be no further quarrel over it as the Punjabees raised it in the form of 'Punjabi Suba' on the basis of language.

NAGA PROBLEM

We hope that Indira Gandhi will be lucky enough also in solving the problem of the Nagas on the Assam border which both Britain and Pakistan (and probably also China) want to keep alive in order to create a regular headache for India. The editorial of the *National Herald* of Lucknow dated the 22nd of February, 1966, offers its comments upon the Naga problem :—

The Prime Minister in her statement in Parliament has explained the genesis and scope of the talks she had with the Naga underground leaders in Delhi last Friday and Saturday. The meeting had been arranged originally by Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri as a goodwill visit, and the talks that actually took place

the Prime Minister explained, were fully in conformity with this idea. The main subject discussed was the importance of preserving peace, and from this arose the idea of strengthening the observer team with additional representatives from both sides as well as two representatives on behalf of the peace mission to enable breaches of agreement on the suspension of operations to be speedily investigated. It has also been agreed that both sides will take quick action on the observers' findings, and as a help towards creating a better climate for a final settlement, the Government are going to examine the suggestion of the Peace mission for the release of Naga prisoners. The Prime Minister's impression of her talks with the Naga leaders was that they were sincere and earnest, and seemed genuinely anxious to ensure the faithful implementation of the agreement on the suspension of operations and to prevent further violence and loss of life. A further meeting with the Naga leaders is to take place sometime in April, and the hope has been expressed that the meeting will lead to some real progress towards a settlement and the restoration of lasting peace and orderly life throughout Nagaland.

The Prime Minister also explained in reply to a question that the claim of the Naga delegation to represent a sovereign Government independent of the Indian Union, which the Naga leaders have been making from the start of the negotiations, is one which the Government of India have never accepted, and that their stand on Nagaland being part of India remains unchanged. This, however, is stating the obvious, but it is nevertheless a disconcerting fact that in the seventeen months since operations were suspended and through the series of negotiations that have taken place, the crucial point of any settlement with regard to the future of Nagaland on which agreement is necessary has somehow never been squarely faced. The hope undoubtedly was that by a friendly encounter with the rebel leaders through a series of patient negotiations on subsidiary matters, the definitive issue of Nagaland's status would be easier of mutually satisfactory agreement. Statements have been made by members of the peace mission in the hope apparently of formulating a *via media* which would be acceptable to both sides without either side feeling cheated of its stated position in

theory, but so far there is no evidence that their effect has been other than to encourage the Naga underground in its intransigence. From the point of view of the underground, the suspension of operations has certain advantages heavily weighted in its favour in the effective immobilisation of forces to whom it has been opposed without putting more than a show of constraint on its own activities. When they erupt into open violations of the cease-fire, as they have done often enough throughout these months, it has been easy for the underground leaders to wash their hands of them as the work of "those who did not wish the talks to succeed." If the statement made to pressmen in Delhi by Mr. Jsak Swu, who describes himself as "Foreign Minister" of the "Federal Government of Nagaland", represents the position of the underground after seventeen months of chequered negotiations, in what particular sense can they wish the peace talks to succeed? Mr. Swu has declared in the clearest terms that no amount of negotiations would make the Nagas give up their demand for independence. "Demand" he was careful to explain, was not really the right word. "We have always been independent and want to remain so. This is not a demand, but a fact which the Indian Government must accept." Mr. Swu has delivered himself of other sentiments all of which suggest that the outcome of the negotiations so far has been to encourage the underground to hope that step by step they are inching forward to acceptance of their self-assumed credentials on their own valuation, and that while this process is at work a situation in which they are freed of the fear of brush with authority is wholly to their advantage. There is no indication that they look upon the suspension of operations or on the peace talks in any other light."

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEMS FOR INDIRA GANDHI

First Problem—Her Own Countrymen

It is a fact that one's own people turn out to be greatest enemy. If a person is unanimously elected, and if there is no contest, no rivalry but a simple walk-over, he is not likely to have any kind of opposition at least for sometime until either he proves his own inefficiency for a high office or he creates some jealousy in others equally competent persons by his extraordinary competency. As Shakespeare has said, "Security (undue self-confidence) is mortal's chiefest enemy," so everybody should be on guard not so much against a fall from a high office but against any act of incompetency which may lead to some vital injury to any national cause which should be always the aim of a good administrator. Mrs. Indira Gandhi should remember that although she got an overwhelming majority of votes against her rival in the contest for the premiership, and also she was very heavily backed by the President of the Indian National Congress who is practically the undisputed authority of the Indian polity so long India claims to be a democratic country. She should also remember that Morarji Desai commands no less confidence and respect of the country than most of the members of the Union Cabinet, and also that he is as competent as anybody else to hold any high seat of office. She should remember, above all, that all other political parties of India have been trying their utmost, ever since the Partition, to come to power by hook or by crook. Political parties are always a sign of a high political consciousness but in a country like India, which only very recently attained her political independence, which has no literacy beyond twenty percent in a vast population of about five hundred millions, and which above all, very poor and morally degraded—all of which facts should prove to be the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of any Prime Minister, not to speak of a woman Prime Minister

who is considerably young and who has had not much of political experience except through her great father Jawaharlal Nehru, who used to take her round the world whenever he happened to pay official visits to the various big and small countries. But then, from the very recent activities of Indira and also from her very tactful talks with the heads of at least four of the biggest and most powerful countries in the world—U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R. and France—we have gained already much of confidence in her abilities, although we sometimes feel somewhat nervous when she goes to deal with her own Cabinet or with the State Ministries or with her countrymen because we have already said that one's own people are to be most dreaded for the simple reason that it is they who invariably turn out to be the first enemy. We remember how a no-confidence motion was moved thrice by some of the members of the Parliament even against the most well-meaning man like Lal Bahadur Shastri, and how even against the most popular personality of Nehru some leader of a political party remarked that Nehru's contribution to India from 1947 to 1962 was practically nil. Ofcourse, one way Indira is one of the most fortunate women in the world, because she happens to be the first woman Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world, because she happens to be the daughter of such an illustrious man as Jawahar Lal Nehru, and also because she represents Indian womanhood who were known during the Vedic and Upanisadic periods of Indian history as the ideals of womanhood in the world when even men, who vaunt of superiority over women in every field, were no better than beasts in the jungles in any part of the world. It was a red-letter day for Indian women when Indira was elected to the most enviable position of the Prime Minister of our country.

SECOND PROBLEM—ILLITERACY, IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE

One way, it is the easiest thing to rule over ignorant or illiterate people, but the other way, it is dangerous. The illiterate people have no idea of politics or government or diplomacy or democracy or secularism or non-alignment or communism or socialism or any thing beyond their stomach, their bread, their

shelter, their bodily existence. When elections for the Congress, for the Assemblies, for the Councils or for the Parliament are held in our country, who actually manipulate the votes and strike the triumph or defeat of particular individual of a political party? It is the middle man or the tout in politics, it is the cunning manipulator who knows all the weaknesses of the poor illiterate people in the rural areas that comprise practically eighty percent of the total Indian population—the chief weakness being bread or money that can buy bread or cloth, the next weaknesses being just momentary *tamashas* or enjoyments which may be alcoholic drink, a little bit of freedom with the *bazaar* women (prostitutes), a little bit of the try-luck sort of poor gambling, and also something of the carnival pastimes, particularly, the merry-go-round for the children as well as for the adults. That is how votes are collected in all illiterate and stomach-starved countries. But India is the poorest country in the world, and that is why Indira Gandhi ever since she became our Prime Minister has been harping on this vital string. So, if you can tip or bribe the poor villagers with five rupees each (which is much more than their monthly earning), they are ready to vote for any scoundrel or a drunkard or a debauch or a traitor who is worse than all the three. Most of the persons who are thus elected to the high seats of office are themselves no better than the rustics except that they can read and write their own vernacular (mother-tongue), while a few of them can probably utter of few syllables of broken English—mostly terms of abuse, and most of them have learnt under the jackboots of John Bull how to put on the tie and the trousers, the hat and the collar, how to drink, how to smoke, how to gamble, how to take and offer bribes, how to corrupt or pollute innocent women, and how last of all, to swindle and cheat both the Government and the people. A Prime Minister or any Minister or any other official should be really afraid of such elected members of any political party, or the Parliament or the Cabinet or the Ministry of any of the States. Such elected persons, to whichever party they may belong to, are invariably corrupt or morally degraded, and consequently, there is no question of their competency or incompetency or for any responsible or irresponsible job. In our country, in every general election we find how the caste, community, sect,

religion, language—all sorts of prejudices of the voters are exploited, and that is why, we find so much of corruption, so much of misrule, so much of indiscipline, so much of economic imbalance, so much failure or unfulfilment of the development projects, so much real or artificial scarcity of food, cloth and many other consumer goods in our country; that is why, we have to levy such heavy taxes. shuffle and reshuffle the budget, go out to various countries with the begging bowl almost twice or thrice every year.

THIRD PROBLEM—OUR EXTREME POVERTY

There is always a limit to poverty; but Indian poverty has no limit. People talk of two square meals a day as the minimum necessity for a human being but most of the Indians do not get even one square meal a day, while many of them often starve altogether for a day or two at frequent intervals. A few years ago, the daily wages per male adult capita was only six annas while now-a-days it has gone up to twelve annas or seventy five paise per day. But with seventy five paise you can hardly get either one kilogram of wheat or rice; and if you have four or five mouths to feed every day, how would you manage with that measure of food or with that amount of wages? That is why, so many people of our country are going half-starved as the result of which they grow anaemic and also develop many wasting diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, pleurisy etc. But what are the causes of our poverty? First of all, exceedingly undeveloped or backward agriculture; second, vagaries of weather—floods and droughts; insects and vermin that destroy food crops; lack of irrigation; etc. There are other causes of our poverty which are not physical and which are due to our defective planning, undue or explosive population, waste of time and criminal neglect of our duties and opportunities which come but seldom in everybody's life. Our Government frequently talks of raising our standard of living in order to reduce our poverty but that is the wrong way of doing it. The urban population almost everywhere has already raised its standard of living; but it has merely intensified our poverty because we have acquired many expensive tastes but have not developed any capacity or qualification for improving our wages or income.

Naturally, if the expenses exceed the income, poverty is the inevitable result. That is why, most of the urban people who try to put up a show of some kind of a respectable standard of living, have no respectable income, and that is why, they have to starve at home for putting up an external show of decency and respectability. Even the rural people who were contented formerly with the loin cloth and felt quite happy putting up in a mud hovel or going absolutely barefoot in sun or shower, must have now-a-days not only better clothes, preferably English dress, but also many unnecessary things such as fountain pens, wrist-watches, radios or transistors, and many others useless things, though without them they can easily perform the daily duties of their life. Formerly, the villagers used to have no furniture in their mud houses, in their thatched cottages, except of course some bamboo *charpoys* (cots) or some wooden stools. Some of the villagers actually sleep on the straws which are scattered or heaped on the floor. But now-a-days, they must have some kind of tables and chairs, racks, shelves, books etc. along with all kinds of hair oil, soap and even other fashionable cosmetics such as powder, cream etc. The village women have now started using even lipsticks. All these artificial and useless things cost the consumers more than seventy percent of their income; and so, how can they fill their stomach with only twenty five percent of their actual income which, we have already said, was hardly twelve annas or even one rupee per day. In spite of such a low income, Indians are in the habit of marrying and becoming parents very quickly because most of them honestly believe that without male children, and particularly, without male children, nobody can go to heaven. Indians being poor and also without sufficient employment throughout the year particularly in the villages indulge in nothing but the 'bed comfort', and consequently they go on multiplying their race like mice and lice. How can such a race be well-provided against unemployment, disease, starvation and death? The approximate figure of the birth of babies per hour in India is thirteen hundred; and one can calculate what would be the total strength of our population after ten years. But can anybody even roughly calculate our earning per capita per day? It must be most discouraging and even most frightening. There is another serious or important cause of our poverty; it is our heavy industrialisation. We have

undertaken too many development projects either for irrigation or for agricultural or for industrial or for educational purposes, and consequently, most of our money has been locked up in these projects. Then again, due to the apprehension of armed aggressions from all corners, India has been investing crores of rupees in arms and ammunition. That is why, if Gandhi were alive, he would have positively said, "Should we feed our millions with butter or with bullets?" Even a country like America which is furthest away from Russia or China is spending crores of rupees every hour on the manufacture of conventional and nuclear arms and weapons. Naturally, how much should a country like India invest in her armaments when she is pressed on all sides by enemies, and particularly, in the North, by China of whom even America and Russia are really afraid? Had not China and Pakistan struck India once or twice, India would not have locked up much of her money in the manufacture of arms and ammunition.

FOURTH PROBLEM—OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER

It is not that Indians alone are bad people; as a matter of fact, all human beings are essentially bad, because otherwise how could there be so much of crimes—cheating, swindling, robbing *etc.* in the human world. In the Bible, it is mentioned that it was due to the temptation offered by *Satan* or the Devil to Eve for tasting the fruit of knowledge (of good and evil) that Eve had her fall, and it was Eve who tempted Adam with the same fruit of knowledge which was forbidden by God to be tasted by man, and so Adam also had his fall from heaven or the Garden of Eden, or rather from his state of innocence—that is how sin or the instinct of wickedness (original sin) got into the blood of man, and was handed down from Adam and Eve to all the succeeding generations of the human race. But apart from the question of original sin which is inherent in every human nature, Indians have been degraded morally by generations or centuries of political slavery. The Moghals, the Pathans, the Greeks, the Hindus and the Britishers, last of all, ruled over India. We know the history of Muslim rule in our country; how some of the Muslim rulers were wicked, treacherous and cruel, and how from them the Indians learnt

wickedness, treachery and cruelty. The Britishers have injected far worse qualities into Indian blood—e.g. deception, fraud, exploitation, bribery, duplicity, highway robbery, treachery, cruelty *etc.* although the Britishers themselves never practise these evil qualities for themselves or in their own country. The Britishers are reputed to be the most honest, the most decent and the most industrious and courageous people in the world when they live in their own motherland or when they have dealings with their own countrymen. It is only in other countries and in their dealings with the people of alien countries, the Britishers are most deceitful, treacherous and cruel. But unfortunately, very few of the Indians have imbibed any of the virtues of the Britishers—their uprightness, their courage, their determination, their tenacity, their patriotism, their wonderful enterprising spirit, their capacity for hard work, their extraordinary power of foresight, their loyalty and faithfulness, their regularity, punctuality, and so many other virtues which cannot be found in other nations of the world. Indian philosophy, Indian religion and Indian culture also are responsible for some of the drawbacks of Indian character. Indian philosophy has taught us always the nothingness of human life; it has impressed upon our mind the cult of renunciation (or the neglect of worldliness or worldly duties); it has urged us to take the material or the physical world as nothing but an illusion; and naturally, Indians have been, from generation to generation, neglecting their duties of life and dreaming of another life in the other world where men go after having left the bodily existence behind. Renunciation, according to Hindu philosophy, is the best way to salvation of the soul from the bondage of the body; and that is why, thousands and millions of the inhabitants of this country have been renouncing human society, worldly life and all kinds of material concerns for their spiritual life (a life of meditation) which they have been practising in the jungles and the mountain caves; that is why, even now-a-days millions of religious mendicants, *sadhus*, *sanyasis* and *fakirs*, who can be found either in the jungles and in the mountain caves or even in the so-called holy cities or places of pilgrimage or in the places of worship. What is the famous *Kumbh Mela* but a huge congregation of the religious mendicants, *sadhus*, *sanyasis*, and *fakirs*,

who accumulate at Prayag (Allahabad) at certain intervals for bathing in the holy water of the Ganges mostly in the full-moon nights. The Hindus superstitiously believe that the Ganges and the Jumna are the two most sacred rivers of India just as the Christians believe that the Jordon is the most sacred river in the world; and just as the Hindus sanctify everything by scattering drops of the sacred water of the holy Ganges river, so also the Christians baptize their newborn babes with the holy water of the Jordon river.

Anyhow, it is the philosophy of India, her cult of renunciation or other worldliness which has made most of the Indian people a race of idlers, vagabonds, criminal absconders *etc.* which definitely are a degenerate race of human beings whether they are Indians or the Japanese or the Chinese. The religion or rather the philosophy of Buddhism was the culmination of the doctrine of renunciation. Whatever spiritual sanctity or significance the Buddhists may attach to the life of the *bhikshus* or mendicants, it is nothing but a life of a gross neglect of the duties of worldly life, and as such, it can never be supported by any conscientious man of the world who ever since his birth on earth has to learn or pick up and also perform so many kinds of worldly duties till his death or his final exit from the bodily existence. So, it was Buddhism which gave the final blow to Indian life and character on some sacred plea of religion or spiritualism. The modern world is unfortunately not a world of idleness or of the neglect of any of the duties of life because such neglect leads to bitter penalties—*i.e.* starvation and death. There is no room for Buddhism or spiritualism or for any cult of idleness in a world where the struggle for existence is the hardest struggle in which one can survive only by hard work, hard labour, by regularity, punctuality and strict dutifulness. There is no escape from the daily routine of grinding the mill, of spinning the wheel, of sowing the corn seeds, of ploughing the lands, of tending the cattle, of reaping the corn, of working day and night in order to earn one's daily food and maintain one's existence in the world from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year.

But Indians have become a set of idlers; they have become liars, cheats, swindlers, traitors, robbers, thieves, conspirators,

murderers, exploiters, tyrants and everything else which they should not be if they at all desire to improve their worldly life, if they want to have their place in the comity of nations, if they want to survive in the bitter struggle for existence. If one becomes a minister in our country, first of all, he tries his utmost to swindle his government of the public money; next he tries to perpetuate his ministry as long as possible in order to draw out as much money through the backdoor as he can do by all sorts of underhand means. What else can you expect from the subordinate officers when their honourable Minister tries to snatch away public money in various ways in order to build houses, invest the same ill-gotten money in various kinds of business for his sons or sons-in-law who too become more corrupt and degraded in character than the Minister himself. In a country where even a police constable lives like a prince, where a police Kotwal earns two to three thousand rupees per month from the gambling dens, from the private brothels, from the illicit distilleries, and also sometimes by hushing up cases of murder, dacoity, burglary *etc.* A railway booking clerk in our country, if he is fortunately posted in some big business centre, can easily earn and does earn by loading and unloading the goods trains which convey the various commodities such as jute, rice, fish, vegetables, cloth, milk, wheat and so many other articles of food, drink and clothing. One cannot imagine how much some of the corrupt P.W.D. engineers and their contractors earn through the backdoor while building roads, bridges, canals, wells, and various kinds of establishments such as office buildings and family quarters for the civil and military personnel of our country. And so far the businessmen, the traders, the industrialists, the commercialists are concerned, they, first of all, exploit and suck the very blood of the poor labourers, who are employed in the mills, workshops and factories; they then adulterate their raw materials as well as their compounds, particularly, the articles of food and drink and medicine; and last of all, in order to earn more money, they make certain commodities altogether disappear from the market in order to show their artificial scarcity and thereby to enhance abnormally their prices with the result that the poor consumers suffer a good deal and often literally starve. Can Indira Gandhi or any other Prime Minister improve or change the

character of our people? If she or he can not, it is no good complaining of Indian poverty, Indian backwardness in agriculture or industries, Indian famine or scarcity of food. What is this fun going on in our country ever since we became politically independent—the fun of planning and unplanning, the fun of borrowing crores of rupees, the fun of begging food-stuff every year from various countries, and at the same time, the fun of crying before the whole world that India is a vast sub-continent, that her population is fast multiplying, that she has to invest a lot of money in her development projects and also in her defence programmes particularly when China has already struck India once and she may strike India again any moment? Let Indira Gandhi concentrate all her energy first on changing the character of her countrymen, and then think of developing India in any way in order to bring up India to the level of America or Africa!

FIFTH PROBLEM—OUR EXPLOSIVE POPULATION

China alone in the world may believe in population because Mao Tse-tung's confirmed conviction is that war is won by man power and not by arms and ammunition, although this theory is completely wrong particularly in an age of mechanical warfare. But India cannot afford to believe in population because she has no money nor food sufficient to feed the fast growing millions. The only way to control explosive population is to practise birth-control, contraception, family planning. But Indian Hindus are incorrigibly superstitious. They honestly believe that birth-control is a great sin because it is the wish or will of God that a human child is decreed to be born on earth at a particular moment, and to prevent its birth by any kind of artificial method either by mechanical or chemical contraceptive or by some surgical method is a great sin. Even a man like Gandhi was against artificial contraception; he on the other hand used to say, "There is a certain safe period between the beginning and the close of menstruation in a woman which does not favour conception, and it is man's duty to have sexual intercourse during this period only and for the sacred duty of procreation." Gandhi further used to say, "If a man does not control his sex instinct, his desire for sexual intercourse but

indulges in it at random he would be worse than a brute which has its particular season (March for the hare and July for the dog etc.) for mating." Ofcourse, what Gandhi has advised us to do by way of self-control is perfectly right and also good; but then, why should we not adopt the scientific methods of family planning when we are living in an age of science? Then again, if by self-control or by some amount of natural regulation of sexual intercourse we prevent the birth of a child, is it not the same if we prevent it by any of the artificial methods of contraception? Therefore, apart from the value of self-control, there is no difference in the prevention of birth either by artificial or by natural methods.

But the question is, why should India adopt or practise family planning instead of improving her agricultural and growing more food just as all the communist countries are doing? Why should India check the growth of her man power when man-power is so valuable not only in agriculture and industrial developments but also in defence? India has plenty of cultivable lands and she can grow immense quantities of crops provided she develops or rather improves her irrigation and other agricultural methods. It is a pity that India even after a lapse of eighteen years of political independence has not realised as yet the necessity or the importance of the improved methods of agriculture. Sometimes we accuse the vagaries of weather; sometimes we complain of rats, the locusts and other vermin and insects that generally destroy our corns or crops but we never accuse ourselves. The editorial of the *National Herald* of Lucknow dated the 13th of April, 1966 is interesting and significant from the point of view of food production plans. We quote the entire editorial below :—

"After the meeting of the Chief Ministers in Delhi, the Union Food Minister is reported to have stated, this was the first time they had come to grips with the precise details of the operation to grow more food. If he is correctly reported, he can only be understood to suggest that the Chief Ministers have taken about eighteen years to realise the full seriousness of the food problem in the country and to agree upon practical steps to conquer it. The Chief Ministers may resent the implied charge

but the results suggest that Mr. Subramaniam is not exaggerating. He has said, the areas where the scheme to step up grain production to ninety seven million tons in the current year is to be launched, have been specified down to the village level. Only the individual farmers to be associated with the scheme remain to be named. The meeting is also said to have taken definite steps to fix responsibility for the execution of the programme. The plan is for the centre and the States to exchange letters or sign an agreement spelling out what each side undertakes to do and naming the officers who would be held responsible for carrying out the tasks. This is something of an anti-climax. Some time ago, it was suggested that the Food Minister and the Chief Minister in each state should be made accountable for food production and that accountability in this context would involve resignation in the event of failure to achieve agreed targets of production. Ministers may have a valid excuse when rains fail as they did last year. But otherwise ministerial responsibility must be interpreted and enforced in the strictest sense. The suggestion does not appear to have been seriously pursued, and the attempt now seems to be to 'pass the book' to officials—the agricultural production officer at the district level and the Commissioner at the State level. But the minister's constructive responsibility should not be allowed to be blurred. One reason why food production plans have so far not received all the attention they call for may be that apart from last year's reverse, the country achieved a seventy per cent increase in farm production in fifteen years, and this may well have induced the vague feeling that if so much could be done without any special effort, we could continue to make similar progress without investing any greater energy and drive than hitherto.

“This is the kind of attitude which must be fought everywhere and given no quarter. 1967 is the crucial year, says the Prime Minister. It is crucial not only because it is the first year of the Fourth Plan and will set the pace of performance during the four remaining years of the plan period but because the drought has brought home to us how precariously the country is poised as regards its basic essentials, and unless we demonstrate by our achievement this year that we are determined to produce all the food we eat, friendly nations cannot be blamed if they

lose interest in our plight. Above all, both ministers and officials must recognise that they have many promises to keep, specially the promise to make the maximum use of the next four or five years to attain self-sufficiency, and therefore, ministers in particular will be on trial every season during the next few years. And what about land reforms? Nobody talks of them. Have they become unimportant? In atleast two matters, the Chief Ministers must be given credit for a realistic approach. First, the full effect of last year's poor harvest is felt not merely in food-grain scarcity but in increased indebtedness of the poorer classes of farmers. And, because their debt has increased their credit-worthiness judged by the strict rules of co-operatives or commercial banks would have touched a lower level. In other words, they would be without adequate financial resources when their need is greatest. The important thing is to liberalise the terms of repayment of loans and to make credit available as quickly as possible. Kharif-sowing must start in the next two months or so, and therefore, help to the needy farmer must be arranged urgently. The Delhi meeting is said to have initiated measures to this end. An agricultural credit corporation is to be set up in States where the Cooperative movement is weak. One had the impression, however, that we already had a number of institutions intended to help the farmer in a situation like this. The second decision of practical importance is to set up large seed farms in every State with Soviet equipment. This is an essential part of the scheme to increase the area under improved seeds. But are these measures sufficient? Reports from Kerala suggest that the package programme or the intensive agricultural development programme there has produced poor results and that the yield has show a downward trend since the introduction of new production techniques under the programme. The reasons for this may be purely local, but they must be discovered and remedies applied. Experience in this State and elsewhere underlines the point made by the Prime Minister that agriculture is not a question only of financial allocation but of efficient administration."

Our question is why should India adopt family planning because U.S.A. or U.K. have adopted it? U.S.A. and U.K. are chiefly capitalist countries, and as such, they want that the

hungry mouths of the labourers should not multiply particularly when labour in the modern workshops, mills and factories has been considerably mechanised. These capitalists want to collect in their hands the maximum amount of wealth, and that is why, they are always in favour of family planning. None of the Communist Countries—either China or Russia—is in favour of family planning because their common wish is that money should be shared equally by all just as food also should be equally shared, whereas the capitalist countries do not want too many hungry mouths to share the fixed amount of food which they can possibly grow with all their scientific methods. Does the food policy of our country indicate that our country also like U.S.A. and U.K. is going to be a capitalist country? Why, then, do we often talk of socialism?

SIXTH PROBLEM—INDUSTRIALISATION

Gandhi was never in favour of any kind of heavy industrialisation of our country. He was in favour of cottage industries; and that is why, he recommended the *Charka* or the spinning wheel, the handloom, the carpenter's chisel, the blacksmith's anvil and the hammer, the cultivator's plough, rural dairies for milk, butter and curd and also for sweetmeats, the cobbler's awl, the tailor's needle and the thimble, and so many other implements for developing cottage industries. Gandhi was not in favour of heavy industries for two or three supreme reasons. He used to say, "Heavy industries lead to an unhealthy competition for money; it leads to the exploitation of labour; it makes a country a capitalist country; it encourages artificialities of life; it increases the lust for money; it creates slum-houses, produces ill-health, and encourages many of the common vices such as gambling, drinking and prostitution."

Whatever Gandhi has said may be perfectly right but we too have to march with the times. If we do not industrialise our country, our standard of living will never improve, our economy also will not rise to any higher level, and our national life cannot possibly keep abreast of other progressive nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the French Republic, Japan and China or Russia. Of course, it does not

mean that by heavy industrialisation, all the ills of life, all the national problems will be over ; certainly not ; but then we shall atleast feel that we are not far behind other progressive nations, we are no less rich or even powerful (because money is power) than others, or even less happy than any other country in the world. Just consider how much depressed we feel inspite of our political independence when we consider our illiteracy, our backward agriculture, our undeveloped or under-developed industries, our poverty, our shortage of food, our ill-health and diseases, and so many others of our deficiencies. It is a wrong idea that by raising the standard of living we can improve the economy of a country ; far from it, unless ofcourse we can increase the purchasing power of the majority of its population. With heavy industrialisation we have seen how the entire population is sharply divided between the capitalist class and the working class, between the moneyed people and the poor people. There is no room for the middle class in a highly industrialised country. In India the middle class is still existing because industrialisation is almost in its infancy in our country. Gandhi is right when he says, "What is the good of increasing our wants and trying constantly to meet them ? What is the good of making ourselves unnecessarily unhappy by creating a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor, particularly when we know that all of us cannot belong to the richer class, rather most of us shall have to belong to the poorer class as they do particularly in America which is the most highly industrialised country in the world. It is absolutely a wrong idea that in Communist or Socialist countries this sort of sharp contrast between the rich and the poor will cease to exist. If you visit Russia or China, which are the two biggest Communist countries in the world and which are also very highly industrialised, you will find that there are only two classes of people—one being the labourers, mechanics, cultivators while the other class is represented by the police and the army and also by the government officials who alone are comparatively far more well-off than the labourers in the mills, fields, workshops and the factories. The lawyers, the teachers, the doctors and most of the members of other professions or trades are no better than the poor common labourers. The policy of the Communist government is to show on paper that

there is no private ownership of any material thing in the form of land or building (House) or bank balance etc. but actually to maintain a regular difference between the labour class and the official class who alone maintain the discipline or the law and order in the Communist countries, and it is the police and the armed forces particularly who are most highly paid because without such high salaries, and other special privileges, neither the civil nor the military officers would care to suppress or oppress any strike or revolt within the States. Further, it is undoubtedly true that with the advance of industrialisation the artificialities of life have also proportionately increased ; and it is also a fact that industrialisation has impaired our bodily health a good deal. How can one keep up his health by breathing the soot and the smoke of the chimneys of the various workshops, mills and factories ? How can one improve one's vitality or strength by eating unnatural or denatured food. When our ancestors used to live on fruits and roots of trees, they used to have much better health and also enjoy a much longer life than we now-a-days enjoy. It is all because the atmosphere has been vitiated, the food and drink have been adulterated or denatured by certain scientific methods in order to suit the artificial tastes of the modern generations of people in most of the highly industrialised countries. Those of the Russians who drink milk (butter milk), those of the Dutch people who live on milk, butter and curd, those of the Indians who live mostly on vegetables are found to live much longer and healthier too than those others who eat nitrogenous food, artificial drinks (such as tea, coffee, alcohol) and also who live in the congested towns or cities where there are honeycombs of residential buildings, office buildings and also industrial buildings such as mills, workshops and factories. It is the pure sunlight and the open air which actually form the very life-blood of human beings or even of animals and birds. You just lock up a wild animal or a wild bird from the jungles, and you will see how after a few days or months they begin to deteriorate in health and vigour. Similarly if one lives continually in the highly industrialised cities or towns one is bound to lose his health, and one naturally has to take much of the poisonous drugs—the antibiotics—which harm the human body much more than we fancy doing any good to our health.

SEVENTH PROBLEM—PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROSTITUTION

It is India's poverty, idleness and also the enervating climate—all the three factors are more or less responsible for the encouragement of private and public prostitution. Of course, prostitution is known as the oldest profession in the world. In France during the 19th century there was male prostitution as it was prevalent also in ancient Greece and Rome in rather unnatural or perverted forms. The ancient Greeks were notorious sodomists while the French people encouraged male prostitution in the natural as well as in the unnatural forms *i.e.* some of the male prostitutes used to the trade of sodomy while a few others of them used to be visited by the corrupt degenerate corrupt women who either did not marry at all or who were not satisfied by their husbands. But at the root of prostitution in every country there was always some degree of poverty or some amount of lust for money because body-selling was and is still the most profitable trade for the simple reason that every body is more or less sexually starved or sexually perverted, and therefore, most people seek some kind of extra natural or perverted form of sex enjoyments in the public brothels or in the private dens where a regular traffic in women is secretly carried on. There is no town or city in India where there are no plenty of public brothels or secret dens of prostitution which are often visited by the respectable men and women under cover of darkness or under the ostensible plea of attending some night club which one can find in big cities like Calcutta and Bombay. In our country prostitution was initiated and patronised mostly by the landlords and the business men who actually represented the richest class of the population. Of course, there are also brothels for the poorer people who visit these public dens of sin just for momentary relief or forgetfulness of their worries or cares and anxieties of life. One need not be surprised to know that the poor labourers of the workshops, mills and factories are the most frequent visitors to the poor picture houses, poor drinking stalls and poor public brothels although these poor labourers have no money enough even to feed the hungry mouths at home. They indulge in such vices simply because they want to

have an escape from their misfortunes or miseries of life, chiefly, their poverty. Ofcourse, this is a kind of suicidal policy ; but then, it is only the poor desperate souls that really commit suicide ; the happier lot never thinks of committing suicide.

During the Zamindary days, the landiords used to tempt and corrupt the young widows, the young spinisters, the young wives of the poor tenants or labourers who could not possibly make their both ends meet even with hardest labour; and when the Zamindars had corrupted such young women and also when they had fully used their youth and beauty, or rather in order to enjoy them more freely away from home, they used to initiate them to public prostitution, hire them houses in the towns or in the cities whichever were more convenient for the landlords to visit their 'keeps' quite frequently. Some of the landlords used to have regular 'keeps' whom they used to pay regular salaries and also sometimes present them ornaments, clothes and other fashionable articles whichever pleased the fancy of their 'keeps'. Social tyranny often led our women to embrace prostitution; and besides, formerly when our women were not sufficiently educated or well-equipped for earning their bread independently, they naturally played the easy victim to the temptation of prostitution which was the easiest way of earning their bread. But the real problem is how to abolish prostitution ? Can it really be abolished ? Where will then the bachelors and the widowers and the oversexed people go for their relief ? By legislation alone you cannot suppress the sex instinct. If you ban public prostitution, it may go underground for a time but it will put up its head in various forms of private prostitution particularly in the big cities where it is so very easy even for college boys and girls to meet in broad daylight in some of the cafes and restaurants which are ostensibly run for that purpose with or without the full connivance of the police. If underground distilleries can be maintained, if secret gambling dene can be run smoothly in the very face of the police and the exciss department, why can not secret prostitution be carried on in some of the respectable cafes and restaurants ? It is said that some of the hair-cutting saloons or massaging resorts have become regular haunts of prostitution. In most of the Western

countries public prostitution has been banned but have those countries been able to stop private prostitution? Certainly not.

EIGHTH PROBLEM—PROHIBITION

Next to prostitution, drinking is the greatest evil. But drinking is regarded now-a-days in the Western world as a fashionable etiquette. Ofcourse, most of the Western countries are extremely cold countries, and as such, their people require alcohol for keeping their body warm particularly in winter as also for lending them extra energy for hard work, whereas in the warmer countries alcohol has a further enervating influence particularly during summer; but there, the people of the East, and particularly, of India have imbibed the drinking habit from their old masters—the English people. Some of us say that our ancient fore-fathers used to drink the Soma juice (a kind of liquor or fruit juice) while chanting the Vedas, and that is why, drinking is not regarded by the orthodox Hindus as a vice. The Christians too associate wine with the sacred festival of the Christmas on the eve of which they take wine and bread which they consider as sacred elements because Jesus Christ is supposed to appear in these two elements—wine and bread. But the *Koran*, the sacred book of the Muslims regard wine as a forbidden drink although most of the modern Muslims indulge in drinking as much as the Christians and the Hindus. Whatever may be the justification for drinking wine, it is positively a ruinous habit particularly when it invariably exceeds limits and proves disastrous for health as well as for economy. Many regular drinkers of wine have died of heart failure, and many more have been reduced to poverty by drinking to an excess. The real problem about drinking is that nobody can remain within limits when once initiated just as one cannot do so while taking part in gambling or in attending the brothel. Drinking, gambling and patronising prostitution are the greatest vices of human nature because nobody can keep within bounds when one begins to indulge in it. All the three vices are highly expensive as well as injurious in bodily health and mental peace; and that is why, they should be prevented to a great measure or

be completely banned by legislation. But the question is, can they be really banned or prohibited or put to a dead stop? There are some businessmen who say that all the three—gambling, drinking and prostitution—are highly profitable trades, and as such, they should not be altogether prohibited but limitedly restricted. India has been trying prohibition in some of the towns and cities but it has not been a success nor has it been considered by the Government or the people as desirable because drinking in the eyes of the upper classes is considered as a fashionable habit, while gambling is also a fashionable pastime; it is only prostitution which is regarded universally as a great vice, and that is why, it has been banned altogether almost in all the progressive countries although prostitution has invaded the domestic circles, the social festivities, the common public haunts such as the restaurants, the cafes, the hotets etc.

NINTH PROBLEM—BEGGING OR BEGGARS.

Begging is regarded in India as a sacred trade because the Buddhists monks have been enjoined by their religion to live by begging. As a matter of fact, Hindu religion lays down renunciation as the only way to spiritual salvation; and this spirit or act of renunciation is expressed in the profession or trade of begging. There are one and thousand ways of begging. The representatives of the various religious institutions, the members of the various religious orders, sects or communities such as Param Hansa, Vivekanand, Gauriya, Trailanga Swami, Buddhist, Shia, Sunni, Guru Nanak, Guru Govind, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Methodist Churches and of various other sects of Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity and Islam undertake the sacred task of collecting funds for the maintenance and propagation of the various religions in our country and also all over the world. But Hindus most religiously follow the trade of begging because by begging one can earn his living most easily, without much of botheration or physical exercise, which most of the Indians invariably avoid because in the East meditation is worship while in the West work is worship. Then again, on behalf of educational institutions, orphanages, *dharamsalas*, rescue homes, medical pharmacies (charitable),

nursing homes, clinics and even hospitals, much money is collected in our country in the name of a noble cause or mission although unfortunately this money is often abused or wasted or misappropriated by the organisers, trustees or managers of these institutions. That is why, begging even in the name of holy causes has become a suspicious trade of cheating and swindling the public.

Then there are thousands and millions of other species of beggars in our country, namely, *sadhus*, *fakirs*, monks, *sanyasis*, and street beggars who are either perfectly able-bodied or crippled in many ways such as in the legs or in the arms or in the eyes or in the tongue etc. The crippled beg because they are not fit for any kind of active life at home or abroad, because they are incapable of using any of their limbs for doing any kind of work by which one can earn one's daily bread. So far the able-bodied are concerned, most of them or rather cent per cent of them are idlers, vagabonds, absconding criminals, cheats, swindlers, and all sorts of wicked persons concealed under the guise of religious mendicants such as *sadhus*, *sanyasis*, monks, *fakirs* etc. Indians are most charitable souls and that is why, they do not make any distinction between the really needy beggars and the deceptive beggars, because they believe that by giving alms, by helping the poor and the crippled, they can go straight to heaven. In every part of the world, all religious-minded people are extremely anxious to go to heaven probably because they believe that heaven is the safest shelter against all penalties of crimes and sins which are generally committed by men and women and children on earth, although unfortunately, nobody has seen any heaven nor any body has any conception of heaven for the simple reason that there is no such thing as heaven or hell in any part of the universe; they exist only in the mind of man; and that is why, some of the poets and philosophers or rational beings have said that the mind has its own place; it makes a heaven of hell, and a hell of heaven.

Any how, the problem of beggars is the greatest nuisance particularly in our country probably because our country is the most religious-minded, most charitable in spirit, most

incorrigibly addicted to idleness, deception, cheating etc. in the name of religion or God who also is an eternal undiscovered mystery ! How much of begging goes on in India can be judged by the huge number of beggars who infest the towns and the cities and particularly the places of worship and pilgrimage because the professional beggars know that it is most paying or profitable to beg at the places of worship or pilgrimage where the visitors are naturally inclined to charity and most emotionally stirred to help particularly those who appear in some religious guise or who are extremely crippled in the body because people all over the world and especially in India believe that God sometimes appears in the religious mendicants or in the physical cripples as Jesus Christ also has enjoined us, "Love only the crippled and the demented because God resides in them." The same Jesus Christ says that every man is the image of God. So, every body should be loved and helped if he comes out for begging. But begging unfortunately has been turned into a criminal profession. Our readers may or may not be aware that most of the street beggars who appear to be crippled in any of their limbs have been crippled deliberately by certain rogues who kidnapped them (the beggars) in their childhood and who forcibly and most inhumanly crippled them by plucking out their eyes or by chopping their tongue or by breaking their arms or legs in order to excite sympathy in the onlookers who would be easily inclined to do charity to such cripples. Most of the kidnapped children are forcibly converted into professional beggars just as some of the kidnapped girls are forced to embrace the immoral trade of prostitution. That is why, begging in India has become a regular trade of crimes, and it must be stopped by tracing out and severely penalising the criminals who are at the back of such crippled beggars. But will our police be honest enough to hunt out the criminals at the back of the professional beggars or will they fill in their own pocket with some extra income from the organisers of professional begging in order to solve their own bread problem in these hard days ?

TENTH PROBLEM—YOUTH INDISCIPLINE

Youth indiscipline in India means specially student indiscipline although other observers regard the strikes in the Government and private offices as well as in the workshops, mills, factories, banks and other public concerns as also another instance of youth indiscipline because most of the strikers or agitators, of movements of grievance and complaint against the employers, are young people some of whom are apprentices in the various trades or services. But our students are the real younger generations of our country, and it is they who have of late gone very rowdy, violent and destructive in all their agitations against authority whether on just or unjust grounds. The only mission of student life should be nothing but study and acquisition of knowledge or learning, and as such, it should have no concern with any political or semi-political or any other movement of the country; but then, in all agitations and movements students invariably take the leading part, partly out of their own accord and partly under the instigation of some of the political parties, that believe only in creating confusion in the country and no harmony or peace or concord. It is mostly the Students' Union that initiates all kinds of disturbances within the educational institution whether it is a school or a college or a university. The Students' Union like trade union tries to misconstrue, mislead and misjudge every little cause of grievance or complaint, and then give magnified colours to it in such a manner that a mole-hill of disturbance assumes the shapes of a mountain of confusion and produces all sorts of dislocation of the normal ways of life in the towns or the cities of our country. The political party leaders often think that by inciting or instigating the students they come into limelight *i.e.*, become prominent in the eyes of the people who are the sole electors of candidates to the various high seats of office in the administration or legislation of our country. It is the political ambition of some of our petty leaders that misguide the students at a moment of crisis; they invariably give a political colour and sometimes a very dangerous communal colour to the most harmless and petty educational problems which can otherwise be solved easily by the teachers or the educational authorities alone. Even when the employees in the Government or in the

private services, in the Government offices or in the private offices, in the mills, workshops and factories or in the banks, posts and telegraph offices or in other essential services such as the railways, the airways, the steam navigation services go on strike on any pretext, it is some of the political parties which are not in power that tempt somehow or other the students of schools, colleges and universities to join the disturbances, the agitations or the movements and make the situation really worse which otherwise can be settled quite easily by the trade unions and the private or government employers. The political parties know that students are the most sentimental or emotional creatures, and as such, they are far more susceptible to appeals in the name of liberty, fraternity, equality, justice, fairness or honesty or some such plea, and that students are the most energetic, most enthusiastic, most thoughtless and most violent type of creatures who can play havoc and work the worst possible destruction of life and property upon any authority against whom they are directed. Every authority, private or government, is naturally afraid of the students chiefly because it is not merely the students themselves but their guardians also are naturally involved into any kind of disturbances in which the students participate. The causes of student indiscipline are many *e.g.* neglect of studies, want of discipline and control of the teachers and the guardians over their pupils and wards, too many vacations and holidays—all play and no work, the Cinema, the coffee houses and the restaurants where the students generally waste their precious time and guardian's money, the gambling dens, the private and public dens of sin (brothels), the horse-races, co-education, interference of the political parties with the educational institutions, want of any constructive plan of life, want of proper opportunities for cannalising the youthful energy of the students through any useful or profitable course, general or rather universal poverty and desperation, and so many other factors of modern life which are responsible for the youth or student indiscipline of our country. Now-a-days, teachers are not respected by their pupils as guardians are not respected at home by their children; the reasons are obvious; both the guardians and the teachers have become a degenerate race; they have become morally degraded because they live by dishonesty, falsehood, deception,

swindling because in these hard days of economy, they can not otherwise exist in the world; and besides they have contracted all possible vices such as drinking, gambling, visiting brothels which make them and their children or pupils far worse economically and morally. Formerly, in India students used to give up their lives for the sake of their teachers while the children too used to sacrifice everything and even their life itself for the service of their parents and other elders in the family. But what a pitiful difference between now and then !

ELEVENTH PROBLEM—EXODUS OF THE RURAL PEOPLE TO TOWNS AND CITIES

Our Community development department has been trying for the past eighteen years to stop the exodus of the village people to the towns and the cities chiefly because the towns and cities of our country are becoming unduly crowded and growing extremely unhealthy, and also because in the rural areas there is plenty of space for containing our explosive population. But our Community development department never thought of the psychology of the human mind, particularly, of the backward human mind which invariably feels attracted towards all kinds of novelties and innovations—in clothes, in food and drink, in pastimes and recreations, in the various ways of living etc. If some of us in the very beginning after coming in touch with the English people in our country, particularly, in the towns and the cities, could feel so much tempted to put on trousers, hat and tie, to possess the radio, the motor car, and so many other fashionable things, to live in a well-furnished house, to put up a decent style of living, to eat and drink things which we never did before in our life, why should not the villagers, when they look at us, feel equally tempted to put on a wrist watch, to use the fountain pen, to possess a transistor or a wireless set, to go on a scooter, to jump into trousers, to give up their dhoti and even speaking their mother tongue or living their ancestral ways of living, to go to the pictures atleast once a week, to live in a house provided with drawing-room sets, dressing table, flush latrine (if not a flush commode), heater, gas stove, electric fans and lights ? It is no fault of the villagers to copy the towns

people in their dress, manners and ways of living; it is but natural for them to run to the cities and the towns if they can not find any of the pastimes, fashionable things, recreations, articles of dainty food and drink, fine costume and fine furniture in the rural areas which now-a-days in their eyes appear to be most backward areas. How can the Government stop the exodus of the village people to the towns and cities particularly when all kinds of employment, pastimes, fashionable things are available in the urban areas? It is no good telling the villagers that God made the country while man made the town. Nobody thinks of God these days. Everybody, first of all, thinks of food, money, employment, and then, also of recreations, pastimes, pleasure houses, good eating-houses etc. all of which we can find in the cities and the towns and not in the villages. We can not find in the villages even doctors or dispensaries, good schools or colleges, cinema houses or restaurants, tram cars, buses or even motor cars. Villagers are not fools; they are also creatures of flesh and blood; they have in them as we have in us all the desires of the flesh which they have the right to satisfy as much as we have the right. Therefore, how can we expect the villagers to stay in those mud houses, in those open spaces studded sometimes with hovels and huts or thatched cottages in which men and cows and horses and buffalos are huddled together as strange bed-fellows indeed, particularly when we in the towns and the cities enjoy all sorts of comforts and luxuries, all sorts of pastimes and recreations, all sorts of funs, sports and games? How can our government, or as a matter of fact any government in the world (except ofcourse America which is the richest country in the world) convert the villages into towns or cities?—And that too by some lectures from the block development officers who too enjoy rides in the jeep-car, put on trousers and live in comparatively well-furnished houses even in the rural areas, only to excite jealousy in the hearts of the poor villagers?—No, that is not the way of preventing an exodus of the rural people into the urban areas.

TWELFTH PROBLEM—OUR CORRUPTION

Who has corrupted us ? It is our proverty, our exploitation for a couple of centuries by the Britishers, our philosophy of idleness, our places of worship and pilgrimage which have become the haunts of scoundrels, villains, swindlers, debauches, hypocrites, and all sorts of criminals in disguise. Some people say that it is the Britishers, our slavery under their rule, it is chiefly their method of administration and legislation that have made us corrupt in every possible way. But in our opinion, nobody except ourselves is responsible for our corruption. There is something wrong with our philosophy too—a philosophy that teaches directly or indirectly the lesson of idleness, neglect of worldly duties, renunciation of the world which means running away from the stern realities, the difficult problems and the hard duties of life. It is because of this doctrine that lakhs of people of our country have become *sadhus*, *sanyasis*, *fakirs*, hermits, recluses or fugitives from work and worldly duties. But these mendicants, who are regarded as saintly persons because of their so-called plain living and high thinking, have to beg alms from the worldly people everyday for their very existence in the world. Wherein then lies their greatness or mark of distinction ? Although the immortal Gita, which is the very essence of Hindu philosophy, preaches and teaches us the great lesson of work as worship yet most of us on the sacred plea of renunciation we keep away from wordly life, shirk the duties of life and yet we carry on our bodily existence in the very same manner as the worldly people do. Ofcourse, the worldly people do not go out for begging their bread, but on the other hand, they work hard daily in order to earn their bread. But then, even while the worldly people put up a show of hard work, they often try to neglect the harder tasks and yet they try to enjoy the fruits of other people's labour without investing their own labour. Here begins the first game of corruption or of cheating.

In our country, most people want to earn the maximum of benefit with the minimum of labour, and yet they put up the show of hard work and honest intention both of which are missing from even the work of the highest dignitaries of our country. Every body in our country tries to fire the gun on another's

shoulder and yet to share the *loot* (plunder) equally with others. This is nothing but a trick of fraud, dishonesty and unfairness. There is no profession, no department, no trade, no walk of life, no vocation in our country which is not corrupt. People say, the police, the railways, the Income Tax, the Public Works Department are comparatively far more corrupt than other departments. But there are certain other departments such as education, posts and telegraph which are absolutely honest and free from corruption. But why the police are corrupt? Because most of us want to commit crimes such as robbery, swindling, theiving, and even murder and because every one of us want to escape from the penalties of these crimes, we naturally try to tip or bribe the police who are actually the agents of law in every country. It is not because the police are meagerly paid that they accept bribes but because who does not want to earn ten thousand rupees overnight by hushing up a case of murder, or earn every month one or two thousand rupees regularly from share of tips or bribes which are paid to the police Kotwal in every town for conniving at the gambling dens, liquor smuggling shops or hotels or restaurants, and secret dens of prostitution? The school teachers or college professors have no such scope for earning any extra money just as the police sub-Inspectors or Inspectors or other senior police officials have got, and that is why, the teachers are safe from corruption while the police are addicted to it. In the same way, it is the businessmen who corrupt the railway booking clerks or station-masters or the train-guards because while booking some perishable or non-perishable articles of trade they want that their commodities may be placed in the market of some destination at the earliest time, and hence, they bribe the booking-clerks who collect the extra money and distribute it among all the traffic staff so that all enjoy the share of the ill-gotten money. In the Public Works Department, it is the contractors who secure contracts from the engineers by tipping them heavily for building roads, bridges, government residential quarters or some such building. It is by bribing the engineers that the contractors earn a lot; but then, the contractors and the engineers cheat the Government both ways *i.e.* in money as well as in material, and in the construction of the particular work too. That is why, most of the engineering works put up by the Government contractors are not at all *pucca* work,

but on the other hand, they disintegrate or come down much sooner than one can imagine. We read in the press reports very often how some of the railway bridges, some of the mountain or hill roads, some of the residential quarters or office buildings are giving way too soon. In the same way, the Income Tax people cheat the Government by under assessing or by allowing scot-free from tax certain industrial or commercial concerns which pay them regular bribes from year to year or from month to month instead of paying any lump sum by which they can be easily caught in the crime. So, it is we the public who have been corrupting our Government in one and thousand ways, because otherwise, the government in every country is an impersonal body. Most of the ill-paid servants of the Government departments demand higher wages or salaries in consideration of the high cost of living; but then, how long can the Government afford to go on increasing the wages particularly when a country is not economically very sound or prosperous? The servants of the Government as well as of private concerns hold out an indirect threat that if wages or particular allowances (dearness allowance) are not enhanced, they will be compelled to be dishonest i. e. they will become corrupt or accept gratuities, bribes or secret tips. But then, it has been found out that even by enhancing the wages or allowances, corruption could not be rooted out or even reduced: but on the contrary, it has been going quite strong or rampant, inspite of the vigilance of the anti-corruption officials practically in every Government department. The anti corruption people are themselves more corrupt sometimes than the corrupt officials of other departments. So, corruption is really one of the greatest problems of our country.

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